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# THE GREATNESS AND DECLINE OF ROME



GUGLIELMO FERRERO





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THE GREATNESS AND  
DECLINE OF ROME

# THE GREATNESS AND DECLINE OF ROME

By GUGLIELMO FERRERO

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# THE GREATNESS AND DECLINE OF ROME

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ROME AND EGYPT

BY

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## CHAPTER I

### CLEOPATRA'S MARRIAGE

The plan of the Parthian campaign—Antony resolves to marry Cleopatra—Octavianus prepares for a final campaign against Sextus Pompeius—The marriage of Antony and Cleopatra—Public opinion in Italy—The first epodes of Horace.

MEANWHILE, apparently in July 37, Jerusalem had fallen into the power of Herod and Sossius;\* the conclusion of this struggle so far modified the situation as to make the trouble expended upon the convention of Tarentum partially unnecessary. The army which had been besieging Jerusalem was set free, and Antony, who had already transferred part of his naval expenditure to his colleague, was glad to save the pay and maintenance of the twenty-one thousand soldiers which he had proposed to borrow from Octavianus; he had now no further need of them to carry out Cæsar's plan, which was an application on a large scale of the advice vainly offered to Crassus by the King of Armenia in the year 55. The conquest of Persia could only be completed by the destruction of the Parthian army, and, in particular, of their famous cavalry with its marvellous skill in drawing the enemy from his base of operations, turning his positions, making frontal attacks and harassing his flanks, while avoiding any decisive conflict. How were these tactics to be avoided? How could Antony oblige the Parthians to give battle at a short distance from his base of operations at a favourable place and moment? Should he follow the route

Antony's plan  
of campaign.

\* This is the opinion of Kromayer, *Hermes*, xxix. p. 563 ff., but the date is very disputable, and it seems to me difficult to reach any positive conclusion. Cp. Van der Chijs, *de Herode Magno*, p. 36. Gardthausen, *Augustus und seine Zeit*, ii. p. 118, n. 12.

37 B.C.

of Crassus and threaten Seleucia ? The temporary occupation of the Mesopotamian towns would make no great difference to the Parthians, while Seleucia was so far from the Euphrates that a campaign in that direction would have provided the enemy with every opportunity for pursuing their favourite tactics, as indeed the disaster of Crassus had shown. Cæsar had therefore resolved to invade Persia by a longer but safer route, on the north instead of the east ; in Armenia Minor, upon the table-land now known as the plateau of Erzeroum, he proposed to concentrate some hundred thousand legionaries and oriental auxiliary troops, a large supply of provisions and an immense siege train ; from this point his march would lie through rich and populous countries friendly to the Romans until he reached the Araxes, which formed the frontier of a great vassal state of the Parthians, Media Atropatene ; thence he would march upon the metropolis of Media, which was only some four hundred kilometres from the frontier.\* If the Parthians came to the help of their vassal king, the Roman army would be able to fight decisive battles in a favourable situation with full protection for their rear ; if, on the other hand, the Parthians abandoned their vassal to his fate, Media would be made the first stage of the conquest and the base from which the Roman army would begin the invasion of Persia. Antony's life of pleasure cannot have made him so effeminate as his biographers have asserted ; otherwise he would never have had the courage to begin so great an enterprise. He required, however, enormous sums of money for the soldiers whom he proposed to concentrate and for the supply of munitions and engines of war. At length he was reduced to the conviction that all his efforts to secure the necessary funds had been inadequate. His needs could not be supplied either by the new sovereigns whom he had enthroned in the east in the year 39, or by his quæstors, who debased the silver coinage to strike

\* Suetonius, *Cæs.* 44 : *Parthis inferre bellum per Armeniam minorem*. For this account of Antony's war, I have followed in almost every instance the masterly reconstruction of Kromayer in *Hermes*, xxxi. p. 70 ff ; he seems to me to have sifted every grain of truth from the classical texts, and to have made every permissible conjecture.



the *denarii* intended for the payment of the legions,\* or by the petty raids upon which he constantly despatched detachments of his army. It was for this purpose that Antony then ordered Canidius to lead six legions into the Caucasus to make war upon the Iberians and Albanians; these legions were to live upon the country and to winter near the tableland of Erzeroum, where the army was to concentrate in the spring.†

37 B.C.

It was thus not men but money that Antony required to carry out Cæsar's great project, which was to make him master of the empire. Octavianus was still poorer than himself and therefore could not be of the smallest use, while Antony's anger must have been aroused by the mistrust and duplicity which his colleague had displayed in the course of their bargaining; he was obliged to swallow the affront which his brother-in-law had inflicted on him at Tarentum by forcing him to beg for an agreement which was much more advantageous to Octavianus than to himself. For this reason, on his short journey from Tarentum to Corfu, Antony considered that the moment had come for him to accept the offer which Cleopatra had made him and to become King of Egypt by marriage.‡ The man who is represented by ancient historians as the hero of a long love-story had contrived to endure three years of separation from Cleopatra; he was returning to her, because she was the queen of the only eastern country which had not been desolated by civil war, and because at that moment his pecuniary anxieties had obliged him to resign part of his fleet to his colleague. This consideration alone is full reason for asking whether the famous love-story was not invented to conceal a much more serious struggle of political interests. It was not to satisfy a romantic passion for the Queen of Egypt that Antony was marrying Cleopatra; his object was to join Egypt to the other countries which he governed and to draw as he pleased upon the treasury of the Ptolemies for the maintenance of his army and the execution of Cæsar's great project. In short, this action and indeed the

Antony's  
reasons for  
marriage with  
Cleopatra.

\* Cp. Pliny, N. H. XXXIII. ix. 132; Mommsen, *Röm. Munzw.* p. 743.

† Dion, xlix. 24; Plutarch, *Ant.* 34 (who puts this event under a different date).

‡ See the appendix.



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37 B.C. whole of Antony's policy can be explained in connection with the conquest of Persia.

Disadvantages  
of the  
marriage.

Unfortunately the dynastic marriage which this expedient involved could not be reconciled with the Roman constitution or with the nature of proconsular authority, transformed as both had been by a century of political upheaval. Marriage with Cleopatra at that moment was a most serious and revolutionary act, even in so disturbed a period. It was a proceeding against every tradition of Roman policy, and it was performed precipitately, as a matter of little importance, in defiance of class and traditional prejudices and with a disregard of consequences which only the most brilliant success could have justified. Greater men than Antony, possibly even Cæsar, would have hesitated. However, when he reached Corfu, Antony sent Octavia and her children back to Italy \* and sent Fonteius Capito to Alexandria with an invitation to Cleopatra to meet him in Syria† His dominating but ill-balanced character, the extraordinary good fortune which he had enjoyed in recent years, the vast confusion of an age when the impracticable might easily be mistaken for the actual, his foresight and at the same time his extravagant optimism induced him thus hurriedly to take a step which was to decide the whole of his future career.

Preparations  
of Octavianus  
against  
Sextus.

Meanwhile in Italy Octavianus spent the last month of the year 37 in carrying out the agreement of Tarentum; he directed the *comitia* to pass a law prolonging the power of the triumvirs until January 1, 32 B.C. and vigorously accelerated his preparations for the war against Sextus, which was to begin during the following year. There is no doubt that public opinion was as much opposed as ever to this project. The old Pompey remained an object of general admiration; the misfortunes of the year 38 were regarded as an act of divine vengeance and as a sign of the divine protection enjoyed by the last scion of this noble and unfortunate family. Octavianus was gaining greater insight and strength of will with the course of years and experience; the beneficent influence of Livia, of his master Didymus Areus and of the more foresighted of his friends

\* Dion, *xlvi.* 54; Plutarch, *Ant.* 35.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.

37 B.C.

had steadied his tendencies to violence and precipitation ; he was anxious not to offend public feeling and possibly would have been ready to satisfy it if he could. At the same time the public admiration of Pompey meant danger to Cæsar's son, and the overthrow of Sextus thus became a vital necessity. Much as he wished to win the sympathy of the masses, he was again obliged to defy public opinion in the prosecution of this unpopular war. The extent of his preparations shows that he was anxious to justify his persistent opposition to public opinion by a rapid, striking and final success ; he was well aware that only so could he regain his hold of the people and that another failure would be fatal to him. He made an attempt to induce Lepidus to help with the ships and the sixteen legions at his disposal ; he completed the construction of the fleet and the harbour which Agrippa had begun ; it is likely that he studied the history of the first Punic War in which Sicily was attacked by sea and land, and drew up a plan of campaign calculated to crush these new Carthaginians. As many legions as possible were to be sent to the extreme point of Italy for transport to Sicily ; upon the same day Lepidus would start from Africa, Agrippa would leave Puteoli with his new fleet, and Statilius Taurus would leave Tarentum with Antony's ships. The latter was a *novus homo*, one of the numerous young men of low birth who had made their way to Antony's favour ; he had distinguished himself in war and Antony had therefore placed him in command of the fleet which was left in Italy.

Thus both Antony in Syria and Octavianus in Italy were extremely busy towards the end of the autumn of 37, when navigation and therefore the interchange of news between the two halves of the Roman world was interrupted. Antony was pushing on his expedition for the following year while awaiting the arrival of Cleopatra ; he ordered the Asiatic sovereigns to send men, provisions and supplies for the following winter to the Armenian plateau ; he deposed Polemo from the throne of Pontus for reasons unknown to us and replaced him by Darius ; he hastily followed the thread of a diplomatic intrigue which chance had put into his hands, in order to secure

Misfortunes of  
Octavianus.



## 6 GREATNESS AND DECLINE OF ROME

36 B.C.

supporters among the Parthian aristocracy ; these latter were displeased with the new king Phraates who had succeeded Orodes, when the latter abdicated in consequence of his overwhelming grief at the death of Pacorus.\* Octavianus on his side succeeded, probably by promises, in obtaining what he wanted from Lepidus ; he expended great energy and care upon his preparations, attempting to rouse Africa and Europe against Sicily and to raise the courage of the soldiers who were depressed by former defeats and by adverse public opinion ; he told them that this war was necessary to complete the task of revenging Cæsar, a task which he had regarded for eight years as a sacred duty incumbent upon his son.† He seemed, however, to be pursued by extraordinary ill-fortune. An epidemic decimated the crews of the fleet left by Antony at Tarentum during that winter and caused such ravages that twenty-eight ships were useless for want of men.‡ Menodorus had met some comrades of his former servitude in the house of the great Pompey at Rome, among the numerous freedmen who remained faithful to the memory of their illustrious benefactor ; he had been bitterly taunted for his treachery, had therefore resolved upon a second desertion and had fled to Sicily to rejoin his former master.§

The marriage  
of Antony and  
Cleopatra.

Absorbed by these anxieties, Octavianus had no idea that the series of Italian revolutions was to be followed by a further revolution in the east during the winter of 37-36 ; it was a movement of no less serious character, though unaccompanied by war or massacre, and the outcome simply of one marriage. At the outset of the year 36, Antony and Cleopatra had celebrated their marriage at Antioch.|| As a wedding present and as compensation for his drafts upon the treasury of Alexandria, Antony had given the queen certain lands belonging to the old kingdom of Egypt ; these he took from the domains of sovereign vassals and from Roman provinces.

\* Cp. Dion, xlix. 23-24 ; Plutarch, *Ant.* 37 ; Justin, XLII. iv. 11.

† Cp. Appian, B. C. v. 98.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.* ; Dion, xlviii. 54.

|| In Syria, according to Plutarch, *Ant.* 36. Kromayer, *Hermes*, xxix. p. 571, who corrects the error of the historian Josephus, seems to prove that the gift was made during that winter.



They comprised Cyprus, part of the Phœnician coast, the valuable plantations of palm trees at Jericho, and certain districts of Cilicia and Crete, valuable for their forests.\* On her side, Cleopatra had followed the custom of the Egyptian kings when they contracted a new marriage and had inaugurated a new era, beginning to count the years of her reign from September 1, in the year 37.† In short, the marriage had been celebrated with all the ceremony customary upon dynastic alliances, though the royal pair could not be regarded as absolutely equivalent to the preceding king and queen. In contracting this marriage Antony may have consented to merge his title as the queen's husband with his pro-consular authority; he had, however, no intention of abandoning the advantage which his pro-consular position would guarantee in other countries, for pro-consul was a title infinitely more formidable

\* For the mistakes of Plutarch, Dion, and Josephus on this subject, cp. Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxix. p. 580 ff.

† *Porphyrius Tyrius* in Müller, F. H. G. iii. p. 724. Letronne, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines de l'Égypte*, Paris, 1842-1848, ii. p. 90 ff., with the help of coins has explained the passage of Porphyry and this event at Antioch, which is obscure in Plutarch's account, by showing that Antony married Cleopatra at that time. Kromayer, *Hermes*, xxix. p. 584, developing the theory of Letronne, has shown that the gifts made to Cleopatra were in connection with the marriage, and formed a wedding present. Letronne's explanation seems to me decisive, and is one of the most important discoveries concerning the history of this time, for it alone will explain to us the great riddle of the battle of Actium. Strack's objection that "Antony was never King of Egypt" is valueless, and only serves to prove once more the danger of following Mommsen's method, and importing legal ideas of excessive rigidity into the study of revolutionary epochs. M. Bouché Leclercq, in a most important note to his admirable *Histoire des Lagides* (vol. ii. 257, n. 1), has well said: "Antony was never Governor of Egypt, and never assumed the title . . . so much is certain; it is also incontestable that, from a strictly legal point of view, a calculation of his reigning years would have been an anomaly." We are, however, in an age of revolution, when party leaders constantly have recourse to strange expedients, and are often obliged to evade the consequences of their own actions. Antony was anxious to satisfy Cleopatra, but did not proclaim his marriage lest he should outrage public feeling in Italy. The theory of M. Bouché Leclercq that Cleopatra struck these coins to provide her nation "with tangible evidence of the accession of Antony as protector and sovereign of Egypt," and that Antony did not go so far as to disavow the action, is highly ingenious and very probable. This political transaction is marked by equivocation in every feature.



36 B.C.

than that of King of Egypt. Thus regardless of the inconsistencies into which he plunged, he struck Egyptian coins bearing his effigy and that of Cleopatra, but styled himself triumvir and αὐτοκράτωρ, the Greek translation of *imperator*; he did not assume the title of King of Egypt; \* he did not inform the Roman Senate of his marriage, nor did he divorce Octavia, whom he had married according to the sacred rites of Latin monogamy and who was carefully bringing up his children at Rome. He wished in short, as an eastern king, † to assume the right of possessing several legitimate wives, a right which Cæsar is also said to have thought of assuming. The fact is that Antony and Cleopatra respectively desired this extraordinary marriage for reasons purely personal; each wished to make use of the other for purposes of self-interest and to pay the least possible price for the exchange of services; Cleopatra wished to use Antony to extend her Egyptian kingdom and to crush the domestic opposition to her rule; Antony needed Cleopatra to provide him with the necessary funds for his Parthian campaign. Though it was the beginning of an alliance between the two, it was also the beginning of a struggle, as one was bound to be the instrument and the victim of the other. At the outset Cleopatra certainly wished Antony to divorce Octavia and objected to his Persian campaign; at first she pretended to yield to Antony's wish, but immediately after the marriage she advanced fresh claims. She asked him to present her with further portions of territory and began to intrigue against Herod whom she wished to depose in order to seize Judea; ‡ she also coveted Arabia, Tyre and Sidon. § Antony, however, was still able to resist the charms of the cunning Egyptian and gave her nothing; he even advised her not to interfere in the affairs of the tributary states; || he also urged on his preparations.

Public feeling  
in Italy.

Octavianus must have been deeply vexed when he heard of this strange political marriage at the outset of the year 36. He was disturbed not so much by the insult to his sister as by the

\* Cp. Letronne, R., I. G. L. ii. 90 ff.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.

‡ Josephus, B. J. VII. viii. 4; A. J. XV. iii. 5 and 8.

§ *Ibid.* A. J. XV. iv. 1.

|| *Ibid.* A. J. XV. iii. 8.

increase of power which the marriage would bring to his brother-in-law. Antony had added wealthy Egypt to his provinces and, if his Persian expedition was successful, would be infinitely more powerful than Octavianus or anybody else. For the moment there was nothing to be done, except to accelerate the progress of the Sicilian war, that it might be finished before Antony returned from Persia. However, Italy as a whole displayed no great agitation in consequence of the marriage, although it was a further step towards that separation of east from west which was bound to ruin the mother city. Though discontented, the nation was crushed; the outburst of fury which had shaken Rome in 39 could not be repeated; the disintegrating force of egoism continued its progress; apart from the chief political cliques, the public, that is the remnants of the old and the rising social classes, were overcome by a vague but chronic disgust with the existing system, by an indefinite and irrational sympathy with the distant Sextus and by regret for the former generation, whose customs and political institutions were both thought superior to the existing system. This feeling may have been sufficiently strong to secure a certain cohesion and moral unity among the majority excluded from power, but they were too weak to impress the leaders of the political cliques, who saw no reason to fear any further riots or explosions of popular feeling. Thus it was that Octavianus could prepare for his final revenge upon Sextus, in spite of the unpopularity of the war, while Antony could divide the empire by his strange marriage, against which not a single protest was uttered at Rome, either in the Senate or in the comitia.

Italy as a whole was reduced to the state of impotent exhaustion, illustrated by the feeble and almost futile nature of the first poetical attempts of Horace; Virgil, the peasant's son, confronting his task with the courage and patience with which his ancestors had tilled the soil, continued his *Georgics*, reading and consulting numerous works, writing and rewriting at great length and preserving only his most perfect lines.\* Horace, on the other hand, timid and vacillating as ever, ventured upon an imitation of the *Iambics* of Archilochus, a metre which no

The satires  
and epodes of  
Horace.

\* Donatus, p. 59 R., Gellius, N. A. xvii. 10; Quintilian, X. iii. 8.



36 B.C. Roman writer had yet used ; he employed it, however, merely as a vehicle for certain recollections of the civil war, \* for insulting an enemy of Virgil,† for the narrative of some trivial entanglement dating from three years back, ‡ or for treating obscene or comical subjects, such as the love-affairs of old women, in which he consulted the coarseness of the prevailing taste. On this subject, indeed, he composed two epodes § of an obscenity almost unparalleled in literary history ; to heighten their interest he represented himself as guilty of crimes which were not rare at that time, but which he may not necessarily have committed in spite of his affirmation. The conciseness and vigour of his form is wonderful evidence of the consummate sense of language and style, of the power of terse and telling description, in which Horace surpasses any ancient poet. But the matter of these poems was insignificant. So also was that of the new satires which he then composed ; here he related another comical recollection of the civil war, || or described an improper adventure of the famous sorceress Canidia, ¶ or took pleasure in showing the importunity and jealousy to which his friendship for Mæcenas exposed him.\*\* Finally he composed a new defence of his satires, in which he replied to accusations that he had made personal attacks and explained that his work was approved by Virgil, Plautius, Varius, Mæcenas, Pollio and Messala.†† Even if he had attacked the most powerful members of Octavianus' party, instead of the obscure nonentities which he satirised, it is probable that no other writer would have felt the need for self-justification in the public eye to this extent. On one occasion only did he make a small excursion into politics, when he wrote a lampoon upon a freedman who had become a military tribune in the army of Octavianus, ‡‡ forgetting that a short time previously he had written a satire in which he boasted his own descent from a freedman. The fact is that Horace had not yet found his footing amid the general uncertainty and universal doubt, which allowed any one in power to embark upon any adventure, though at his own risk and peril. The boldest enterprises could be undertaken, but woe to the unsuccessful leader of them.

\* *Epodes*, 13.

§ *Ibid.* 8 and 12.

\*\* *Ibid.* i. 9.

† *Ibid.* 10.

|| *Sat.* i. 7.

†† *Ibid.* i. 10.

‡ *Ibid.* 11.

¶ *Ibid.* i. 8.

‡‡ *Epodes*, 4.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PARTHIAN CAMPAIGN

Antony starts from Syria with his army and reaches Asia Minor—The beginning of the war between Sextus Pompeius and Octavianus—Lepidus deranges the plans of Octavianus—Clever stratagem of Sextus Pompeius—Octavianus surrounded at Taormina—The retreat of Cornificius—Final defeat and flight of Sextus Pompeius—The difficulties of the Parthian campaign—Antony is obliged to retreat—The reasons for his failure.

ANTONY was the only triumvir who still retained any enterprise or power of imagination. In March 36 he started with his army and with Cleopatra for Zeugma ;\* there he left the queen, asserting that he intended to force the passage of the river, which was guarded ;† he may have left some legions on the Euphrates, and with ten legions and ten thousand cavalry ‡ he began his march, about the middle of April. He had a journey of some nineteen hundred kilometres before him, § a five months' undertaking. After crossing the Taurus he arrived at Melitene in the first days of May and proceeded to Satala, which was reached at the outset of June. Then he continued his long journey to the table-land of Erzeroum, where he found the whole of his great army gathered in June. The force included the six legions of Canidius, which had returned from the Caucasus,

Antony's  
march to  
Media.

\* Cp. Josephus, A. J. XV. iv. 2 ; B. J. I. xviii. 5. Strabo, XI. xiii. 4 (524).

† Dion, xlix. 25 ; obviously, however, a feint was in question. Cp. Kromayer in *Hermes*, xxxi. p. 101.

‡ This is a conjecture of Kromayer, in *Hermes* xxxi. p. 71.

§ Strabo, XI. xiii. 4 (524), and Plutarch, *Ant.* 38, estimate eight thousand stades, that is, one thousand four hundred and forty kilometres from Zeugma to the Median frontier; Livy, *Per.* 130, gives three hundred miles, or four hundred and forty-three kilometres from the capital of Media to the frontier.



36 B.C.

Polemo, the new king of Pontus, Artabazes (or Artavasdes) the king of Armenia, who had come to meet him with part of his contingent (six thousand cavalry and seven thousand infantry), the smaller eastern contingents, the great siege train and all the camp followers and beasts of burden.\* The remainder of the Armenian contingent seems to have been already on the frontier in readiness to enter Media.† The sixteen legions must have amounted to some fifty thousand men; to these were added Antony's cavalry, the contingents of the allies, amounting to some thirty thousand men‡ and the sixteen thousand cavalry of the Armenian king; thus the whole army numbered a hundred thousand men and formed one of the greatest forces which the ancient world had seen. Before entering upon the campaign Antony reviewed the army and then began his final march upon the Median frontier; he was accompanied by a brilliant staff of important Roman personages including Domitius Ahenobarbus and Quintus Dellius, a former officer of Cassius, who had entered Antony's service.

Octavianus  
resumes war  
with Sextus.

At this moment the government of the triumvirs was recovering some of the ground that had been lost in the year 39 in the struggle against public opinion. Octavianus was beginning the war against Sextus Pompeius and his fears that Italy might attempt to thwart his plans had proved groundless. His careful arrangements were carried out to the letter; on the appointed day, July 1, 36, Lepidus left Africa with seventy ships of war, twelve legions and five thousand Numidian cavalry upon a thousand transport vessels. Taurus started from Tarentum with two hundred ships and Octavianus, with Agrippa, left Puteoli with the remainder of the fleet, after a solemn libation to Neptune had been offered upon the flagship in which the admiral prayed the gods of the wind and of fair weather to support him in his effort to avenge his father. § Neptune, however, persistently favoured Pompey's son and promptly disturbed the execution of these careful arrangements with a heavy gale and storm. Taurus was obliged to

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 37. Cp. Kromayer, *Hermes*, xxxi. p. 82.

† Cp. Kromayer, *Hermes*, xxxi. p. 83 ff.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.

§ Appian, *B. C.* v. 98.



put back to Tarentum after a vain struggle with a contrary wind; Octavianus insisted upon continuing the crossing and off Cape Palinurus lost twenty-six large vessels, a considerable number of smaller ships and was obliged to take refuge in a harbour.\* Lepidus alone arrived in sight of Sicily at the end of the third day with the loss of some ships, but on July 4 when he attempted to disembark at Lilybæum (Marsala) he found himself unsupported and confronted by the enemy. However, he was able to land without difficulty. Sextus, who possessed only eight legions and about two hundred ships, was unable to face three simultaneous attacks; he had therefore sent troops to Pantellaria and to the Ægatian islands, had fortified numerous points on the coast and had left a legion at Lilybæum. The main body of his troops was concentrated upon a triangle formed by Mylæ (Milazzo), Cape Faro and Messina, where his fleet was waiting; † in other words he was reserving his strongest forces for Octavianus, whose attack was to be expected from this point and who was his best armed and most formidable enemy. If he succeeded in defeating Octavianus, he might easily make some arrangement with Lepidus. Lepidus therefore had no difficulty in driving back the legion stationed at Lilybæum. However, immediately after his disembarkation, Lepidus found his further movements checked. Upon receiving information of the damage which Octavianus had suffered, Sextus Pompeius had sent a certain Papias with part of the fleet against Lepidus. Papias did not arrive in time to prevent Lepidus from landing ‡ but he was able to

\* Dion, xlix. 1; Appian, B. C. v. 98.

† Dion, xlix. 2: ὁ Σέξτος, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐν Μεσσήνῃ ὑφώρμει, τὸν διάπλουν αὐτοῦ τηρῶν, τῷ δὲ Ἀγρίππᾳ Δημοχάρην ἀνθορμεῖν ἐν Μύλαις, ἐκέλευσεν . . . Appian B. C., v. 97: τὸ δὲ ἄριστον τοῦ ναυτικοῦ ἐν Μεσσήνῃ συνέειχεν . . . v. 105: στρατὸν δὲ ἐπὶ μετώπῳ τῆς Σικελίας πλέονα ἰδὼν (Octavianus) ἐν τε Πελωριάδι καὶ Μύλαις καὶ Τυνδαρίδι . . . These fragments of information, given at different moments of the war, show us that Pompeius' strategical arrangements were as stated in the narrative.

‡ Appian does not state with any clearness what measures of defence Sextus had taken against Lepidus. In v. 97, he says that a certain Plennius was sent against him; in v. 104, he suddenly brings the admiral Papias on the scene, who destroyed part of the fleet of Lepidus after the disembarkation of the latter; he adds that Lilybæum was attacked by land, not by Plennius but by Tisienus. This Tisienus



36 B.C. intercept four of his legions, which had started somewhat later, and in a bloody naval combat annihilated two legions and sank a large number of transport ships with provisions and munitions of war.\* Alarmed by this attack upon his rear and informed of the losses which Taurus and Octavianus had sustained, Lepidus prepared to defend himself in Lilybæum.

Octavianus  
reorganises  
his forces.

Thus a few days after this vigorous opening to the campaign, every one had been reduced to complete inactivity. Sextus could not venture to seize the opportunity for an attack upon Octavianus; he knew that his forces were too inferior to risk a blow, though success might have changed the situation. He preferred to wait, imagining that Octavianus' losses were very considerable and trusting that he would defer the campaign until the following year.† Much might happen within twelve months. He therefore remained at Messina on the alert. Meanwhile Statilius Taurus stayed at Tarentum; Octavianus and Agrippa were repairing their fleet at Cape Palinurus, while Lepidus was waiting inactive at Lilybæum until his allies could once more take the sea.‡ Sextus, however, was mistaken in his hopes that Neptune would protect him for another year. Octavianus realised that to postpone the war for another twelve months would expose him to universal ridicule, after his ceremonious opening of the campaign. Though public opinion in Italy had hitherto been indifferent, the news of this initial failure had caused some sensation; great demonstrations against Octavianus had been made at

was doubtless the general whom Dion calls Gallus as Dion, in xlix. 8, gives his name in full as Tisienus Gallus. Were Tisienus and Plennius one and the same person? As for Papias, it is obvious that his interference in the struggle was the result of sudden decision, for Appian clearly says, in chap. xcvi., that Sextus intended to keep his fleet (*ἄριστον τοῦ ναυτικοῦ*) at Messina and to oppose Lepidus only by land. It seems to me very probable that at the outset of the campaign Papias was at Messina under the orders of Sextus, who sent him against Lepidus when he heard that Sextilius Taurus and Octavianus were detained by the damage sustained during the storm. Thus we have the reason why Papias could not attack Lepidus, who had already landed, and was only able to destroy that part of his fleet which formed the rear-guard of the expedition.

\* Appian, B. C. v. 104.

† *Ibid.* v. 100.

‡ This is a reasonable conjecture, as it explains why we have no information of his movements at this time.



Rome and disturbances had occurred.\* The struggle must therefore be decided this year. With the help of Agrippa, Octavianus strove to repair his damaged fleet as far as possible; the sailors who had survived the wreckage of their ships were sent to Tarentum to man Antony's twenty-eight vessels, which were lying empty in that harbour. Octavianus despatched Mæcenus to Rome to suppress the disturbances;† he sent despatches to Lepidus ordering him to follow the road from Lilybæum to Messina along the southern and eastern shores of the island and to pass through Agrigentum, Catania and Taormina, where he was to await the landing of the troops which were to be transported by the fleet at Tarentum.‡ He himself proposed in conjunction with Agrippa, to seize the islands of Lipari, Milazzo and Tyndaris, that he might disem-

\* Appian, B. C. v. 99. Cp. Appian, v. 112.

† Appian, B. C. v. 99.

‡ Appian, B. C. v. 103, says that Octavianus, "having gone to Vibo, ordered Messala to cross to Sicily with two legions, to join the army of Lepidus and to establish himself in the gulf near Taormina." Thus it is obvious that at the outset of the war Octavianus desired Lepidus and his army to seize Taormina, and to await reinforcements from Italy with the object of attacking Sextus upon that side; this operation could only be performed if Lepidus went by the road stated in our narrative, through Agrigentum and Catania. Lepidus, however, did not perform this march, as we hear nothing of him during the fighting about Taormina, nor, indeed, throughout the war until its closing stages. At the close of the war we shall see him join hands with Octavianus, according to Dion at Artemisium, close to Milazzo (xlix. 8). Appian gives a further detail which is obscure, and names the territory of the Παλαιστηνοί (?) as the place of meeting—B. C. v. 117; however, he confirms Dion's narrative with the statement that the meeting of the two generals was accomplished while Octavianus was operating between Tyndaris and Milazzo upon the northern coast of Sicily. This is equivalent to saying that Lepidus came from Lilybæum by the other and shorter road which follows the northern coast of the island, through Palermo. If Lepidus took this route, we can understand why Octavianus' original plan was not carried out; but we still have to explain why Lepidus was unwilling to follow the other road to Taormina and to attack Sextus upon the other flank. Dion, xlix. 8, gives an explanation which also provides a strong argument in support of our hypothesis. "Lepidus . . . had dissensions with Cæsar. Lepidus asserted that, though Cæsar's colleague, he was not allowed a due share in the direction of operations; Cæsar continually used him as a lieutenant. Therefore he inclined to Sextus, and opened secret negotiations with him." Lepidus thus declined to carry out Octavianus' plan in order to show that he was not a mere subordinate and to hinder his prospects of success.



36 B.C.

bark another army upon the northern coast and blockade Sextus Pompeius in the extreme point of the island. While these preparations were in progress, Menodorus arrived with some ships and once more offered his services to Octavianus in anger at the very reasonable distrust of Sextus, who had preferred to use an unknown leader like Papias for the expedition against Lepidus. Octavianus welcomed him but entrusted him with no responsible post ; \* this was the sole punishment inflicted upon this freedman for his treachery, in a state which for centuries had considered merciless severity to ungrateful freedmen as the first social duty of the upper classes. This fact alone will demonstrate to what an extent discipline and authority had been relaxed during the civil wars. Such clemency would have been regarded as criminal or foolish two centuries earlier.

Lepidus fails  
to co-operate.

At the close of July Octavianus made a fresh start with the ships which he had repaired as best he could ; Taurus was anchored in the Gulf of Squillace and the troops were concentrated at the extremity of Italy.† This combined movement was once more deranged, not by stress of weather but by the bad faith of Lepidus. Irritated by the lack of consideration which his two colleagues showed for him, he was especially angry with Octavianus, who treated him with vast condescension, though much the younger man ; he therefore conceived the idea of showing his equality and his independence ; he marched upon Messina but instead of following the road prescribed by Octavianus, he took the other road along the northern coast of the island by way of Trapani, Partinico, Palermo and Cefalù. The plan as originally conceived was thus rendered impossible and when Octavianus reached Vibo (Bivona) he was obliged to rearrange his combinations. Agrippa was now to carry out their proposed movement by himself, to seize the Lipari Islands, and to harass the enemy's fleet from Milazzo to Tyndaris, thus preventing Sextus from protecting the coast as far as Taormina ; ‡ when the sea passage had thus been

\* Dion, xlix. 1 ; Appian, B. C. v. 100-102 ; Orosius, VI. xviii. 25.

† Appian, B. C. v. 103.

‡ Appian, B. C. v. 103, definitely says, that the encampment at Taormina to threaten Messina was to be made by Lepidus and Messala ; he does not, however, explain why two chapters later



opened, Octavianus would seize the moment to disembark at Taormina the five or six legions (the exact number is unknown) which were waiting on the shore of the Gulf of Squillace; he would then begin the attack upon Messina which he had wished to entrust to Lepidus and Messala. 36 B.C.

The plan was well conceived but its success depended upon the utmost energy, rapidity and presence of mind on the part of Octavianus and Agrippa. Sextus was at Messina with the main body of his fleet and Democares at Milazzo with thirty ships.\* Octavianus went to Squillace and took command of the fleet; Agrippa seized the Lipari Islands without difficulty† and began to harass the enemy with feints and skirmishes, to prevent Sextus from turning his attention to the other coast.‡ Finally he left the island of Vulcano one morning with half his fleet, intending to surprise Democares off Milazzo. To his great surprise he perceived that Democares had already received a first reinforcement of forty ships and a second of seventy ships, under the orders of Sextus himself.§ It seemed that Sextus was committing the very mistake to which Agrippa wished to drive him and was leaving Messina. Agrippa immediately sent a small vessel to Octavianus to inform him that Sextus had evacuated Messina; he called up the rest of his fleet and resolved to protract the engagement as long as possible, that

Naval battle  
off Milazzo.

he represents Octavianus as resolved to go to Taormina in person at the head of a small army. The refusal of Lepidus which we have assumed, relying upon Dion's text (see preceding note), entirely explains this change of plan, which could have been made only to meet a serious difficulty. In fact, the disembarkation under such conditions was a most dangerous operation, and Agrippa and Octavianus would have been guilty of sheer madness had they run the risk, when they had already one army in Sicily under Lepidus, if Lepidus had been willing to move. The bad faith or the obstinacy of that general obliged them to separate and attempt this audacious stroke, which nearly ended in utter disaster. In short, the refusal of Lepidus profoundly disturbed the whole plan of campaign, and the history of the war is obscure in the narratives of Dion and Appian, because they have neglected this most important fact and have failed to realise the equivocal action of Lepidus.

\* Dion, xlix. 2; Appian, B. C. v. 105, gives more details.

† Appian, B. C. v. 105, says that Agrippa took Stromboli and Vulcano, probably because these were the only two islands which were garrisoned.

‡ Dion, xlix. 2.

§ Appian, B. C. v. 105.



36 B.C. Octavianus might have time to disembark and begin a vigorous attack.\* Agrippa's vessels had been built especially for war and were almost entirely of heavy tonnage, provided with towers and powerful artillery; they were the ironclads of the age. The fleet of Sextus, on the other hand, was composed of vessels corresponding to our cruisers; they were almost all merchant ships which had been transformed to ships of war and were therefore shorter, less protected and less well armed but speedier and more easily manœuvred. The vessels of Sextus therefore dashed upon the long oars of the enemy's ships, attempting to break their rudders and to attack them on the bows or stern, while Agrippa's ships attempted to harpoon these greyhounds of the sea, or to drive them away with a rain of missiles.† It was a long duel between strength and skill and in the evening Sextus Pompeius retired in good order to the harbours of Milazzo with the loss of some thirty of his little vessels. The battle was thus indecisive.

Hesitation of  
Octavianus.

Though Octavianus had received Agrippa's message, he had been unable to act with the necessary speed. During the day he had embarked three legions upon his ships, comprising a thousand light infantry and two thousand disbanded veterans to whom lands in Sicily had been promised; ‡ it was not until the evening § that he reached Leucopetra (Capo dell' armi); there he waited in the doubt and anxiety which often overcame him when he was obliged to carry out a well arranged and comprehensive plan. He hesitated whether to make for Taormina and disembark during the night or to wait till the next day. While Octavianus was thus hesitating at Leucopetra, Agrippa, who had lost five large ships, was much disturbed by the strange tactics of the enemy and by the readiness with which he had abandoned Messina. He thought that Sextus concealed some stratagem behind his sudden declaration of defeat; he wished to continue the pursuit without delay, even if he were obliged to spend the night anchored in the open sea, or to continue the battle during the darkness.|| Unfortunately his

\* Appian, B. C. v. 106.

‡ Appian, B. C. v. 110.

† *Ibid.*; Dion, xlix. 3, is less detailed.

§ *Ibid.* v. 109.

|| *Ibid.* v. 108.



friends urged the exhaustion of the sailors and the danger of spending the night in the open sea. Agrippa was obliged to recognise the truth of these representations and returned to the island of Vulcano,\* intending to threaten Milazzo and Tyndaris the following day and thus to keep Sextus Pompeius on the spot. He thought that Octavianus would have already disembarked his troops. 36 B.C.

Agrippa's anxiety was well founded; Octavianus had postponed the disembarkation till the next day† and the appearance of Sextus Pompeius off Milazzo, the battle and his retreat, were merely a feint intended to entrap his rival. Sextus wished Octavianus to believe him occupied elsewhere and intended to surprise him as soon as he had disembarked at Taormina and to seize his person. If Octavianus could be removed, Sextus might always count upon his popularity to help him to an agreement with Antony and the others. He had therefore sent a powerful force of infantry and cavalry to Taormina; on the evening of the naval battle he had pretended defeat and had withdrawn, intending to keep an eye upon Octavianus and to descend upon him at Taormina the next day, during his disembarkation.‡ During the night events went exactly as Sextus wished. Agrippa was dissuaded from pursuing his first and excellent idea; Octavianus, who probably received news of the naval battle during the night, imagined that Agrippa had won a victory and resolved to sail for Taormina the next day, while Agrippa was attacking Tyndaris; the force which Sextus had sent to Taormina had time enough to reach the town and to prepare for the reception of Octavianus and his troops. Consequently in the afternoon, when the soldiers of Octavianus had disembarked and were beginning to construct their camp, they were suddenly alarmed by the appearance of the fleet of Sextus at sea, while bodies of infantry and cavalry surrounded the town upon every side.§ The nature of the trap was immediately obvious to every one, but Octavianus, as usual, lost his head and made no effort to organise a defence;

The stratagem  
of Sextus.

\* Appian, B. C. v. 108; Dion, xlix. 4, gives another version.

† Appian, B. C. v. 109.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.* v. 109-110; Dion, xlix. 5.



36 B.C. had the enemy attacked more vigorously or the light lasted longer, his force would probably have been annihilated. Fortunately nightfall cut short the confused struggle which was raging around the town; but it brought no counsel to the timid general. Octavianus found himself surrounded, knew nothing of Agrippa's movements and realised that the chief object of Sextus was to seize himself; he therefore abandoned all thought of preparation for the morning struggle and devoted his attention to saving himself by abandoning his army. This alone can explain his desperate resolve to attack the enemy's fleet the next day and to open a way of escape by sea. During the night, while the soldiers were completing the camp, Octavianus surrendered the command of the army to an officer named Cornificius and ordered the fleet to prepare for a start; at daybreak he hoisted his ensign upon his ship and fell upon the fleet of Sextus.\* The fleet of Sextus was less numerous but better commanded; it withstood the shock and routed the fleet of Octavianus. Sixty vessels were captured and the remainder fled in disorder.†

Agrippa's  
troops relieve  
Cornificius.

However, Octavianus once again escaped and reached a solitary bay in the evening with one ship, where he was welcomed by Messala, who was guarding the coast; ‡ though he had once more ignominiously failed, he had none the less shattered the hopes of Sextus. Nothing could save the son of Pompey but the death of Octavianus; the ultimate defeat of Sextus in a regular war was inevitable, notwithstanding the mistakes of his opponents, simply because his forces were hopelessly outnumbered. During the two days conflict at Taormina, Agrippa had seized not Milazzo but Tyndaris; § under the

\* Appian, B. C. v. 111, and Dion, xlix. 5, give very brief descriptions. But everything points to the fact that Octavianus showed incompetence and fear, otherwise with his larger force he should not have lost so many ships.

† When Octavianus restored Antony's fleet, sixty vessels were wanting (Appian, B. C. v. 139 : 70 out of 130); most of these vessels were lost in this battle, the only engagement fought by this fleet.

‡ Appian, B. C. v. 112.

§ Appian, B. C. v. 109, describes the first attempts to capture Tyndaris; from chap. 115 it seems that Agrippa had already seized Milazzo; chap. 116, however, shows that Milazzo was still in the power of Sextus Pompeius at the time when Tyndaris was used for



36 B.C.

eyes of Sextus he began to transport soldiers into Sicily ; meanwhile Lepidus, though with great deliberation, was approaching Tyndaris with his army, while Cornificius, to avoid starvation in his camp near Taormina, started for Milazzo, which he believed Agrippa had captured. Octavianus soon recovered from his fright ; he realised that if Cornificius could be saved, his failure would be in great part repaired ; he therefore ordered Agrippa to send troops from Tyndaris to meet Cornificius. Cornificius marched for four days, fighting incessantly under the utmost privations, unaware of the attempts made to help him and obstinately pursued by the enemy ; at the end of the fourth day he was about to yield in exhaustion, when suddenly the enemy took flight. Agrippa's three legions had arrived under the orders of a certain Laronius, another of the nonentities suddenly raised to high command amid the confusion of those years.\*

Thus Octavianus had failed in his attempt to attack Sextus Pompeius upon two sides simultaneously, but notwithstanding his ill fortune and his errors he had contrived to throw an army into Sicily. From that moment numerical force became decisive. Day by day fresh troops disembarked at Tyndaris to swell the army. Sextus Pompeius concentrated all his forces and did his best to hamper the disembarkation and the enemy's operations ; † however, he soon realised, when Lepidus joined the troops in waiting at Tyndaris, that though he might delay his defeat for a few days, it was none the less inevitable. He could only prevent the continual disembarkation of troops in Sicily by the capture or destruction of the enemy's fleet ; he therefore resolved upon this last and desperate alternative and sailed out at the end of August ‡ with about a hundred and eighty ships to attack off Naulochus an enemy whose force was far greater and was inspired by the confidence of victory. Sextus was defeated ; a hundred and sixty of his ships were

Final defeat  
of Sextus.

the disembarkation of Octavianus' troops. It was therefore captured, as Appian shows, B. C. v. 116 : ἀρτι δὲ ὁ Ἀγρίππας Τυνδαρίδα εἰλήφει.

\* Appian, B. C. v. 113-115 ; Dion, xlix. 6-7.

† Appian, B. C. v. 116-118 ; Dion, xlix. 8.

‡ The C. I. L., x. 8375, tells us that Pompeius' army surrendered to Lepidus on September 3.

36 B.C. destroyed or captured and with the seventeen which remained he fled to Messina ; there he embarked his treasures and his daughter and sailed for the east. Democares perished in the battle and Apollophanes surrendered.\* Thus with infinite trouble Octavianus completed his inglorious conquest of Sextus Pompeius.

Antony's  
advance to  
Media : the  
loss of his  
siege train.

During the course of the Sicilian war, Antony had reviewed his troops upon the plateau of Erzeroum and had despatched them to the Median frontier by two different routes.† The siege train included engines of enormous size, which were transported with immense trouble and difficulty.‡ The contingents from Armenia and Pontus with two legions under the command of Oppius Statianus took the easier but longer route along the valley of the Araxes ; Antony with the remainder of the army followed a more direct but more difficult route. In this way he reached the Median frontier towards the end of July. After-events show that he should have awaited the other army corps in order to invade the enemy's country with the whole of his forces ; however, he marched without delay upon Phraaspa, the capital of Media Atropatene, some days in front of his siege train and rear-guard. Possibly misleading intelligence had induced him to believe that in the absence of the kings of Media and Parthia, he might easily surprise the capital, or possibly, in view of the situation in Italy, he was anxious to conclude the war as soon as possible and to return in triumph. In any case his action was a grave mistake. He reached the metropolis towards the end of August without observing any sign of the enemy ; but though the Parthian cavalry could not operate with any facility amid the hills of Media, those obstacles afforded easy cover for a large army and every facility for observing the movements of an enemy who could not venture to rely upon information derived from the inhabitants. Thus, while Antony was drawing his siege lines around Phraaspa, the king Phraates passed unobserved behind him with a large force of cavalry and attacked at Gazaca the second army which

\* Appian, B. C. v. 119-122 ; Dion, *xlvi.* 8-11.

† Cp. Kromayer, *Hermes*, *xxxi.* p. 84.

‡ Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, ii. Paris, 1904, p. 259.



was escorting the siege train. From this point the course of events is somewhat obscure. It may be that the King of Armenia was guilty of that duplicity which constantly characterised the action of eastern monarchs during military operations ; possibly also the Pontus contingent, which had been something of a makeshift, proved useless. In any case the siege train was captured and destroyed, the troops of Oppius were crushed and Polemo was captured ; the King of Armenia, in real or pretended dismay, returned to his own country, taking with him the best part of the cavalry and that best practised in the enemy's tactics.\*

Antony, however, courageously resolved to continue the siege, though deprived of his engines of war ; he hoped that he might be able to force a decisive engagement with the Parthian army, which had now returned to Phraaspa and was continually wandering about his lines, harassing his operations and yet avoiding any decisive conflict. The legion was a powerful instrument of war but was useless against so mobile a foe. Antony made several attempts to force a battle ; on one occasion he retired a day's march from the town with the whole of the cavalry, with ten legions and three pretorian cohorts ; he collected enormous quantities of provisions and laid waste the surrounding country ; he then pretended to have been seized with panic in the course of a skirmish. The Parthians were deceived and began the attack, expecting to repeat the success of Carrhæ. However, as soon as they perceived that the legions stood firm and were ready to attack in turn, they retreated precipitately. The infantry pursued them some ten kilometres and the cavalry about thirty, but to no purpose ; very few were killed or captured.† Antony was thus obliged to resume his siege operations, in the hope that the Parthians would attack the Roman troops to relieve the town from the last extremity of famine. However the month of September passed by ; ‡ the besieged made constant sorties, § proving that

Antony  
continues the  
siege.

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 38-39 ; Dion, xlix. 25.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 39.

‡ *Ibid.* *Ant.* 40 : μετὰ φθινοπωρινῇν ἰσημερίαν. See Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxi. p. 92.

§ Plutarch, *Ant.* 39 ; Dion, xlix. 36.

36 B.C. neither their courage nor their supplies were deficient ; the siege operations were hampered by the loss of material while the October rains and fogs were beginning. As the neighbourhood had been completely ravaged, it was necessary to send detachments far and wide to secure provisions.\* Constantly on the alert and exhausted by arduous toil, the army was worn out by fatigue and famine. Antony, however, held out ; he maintained discipline with the greatest vigour† and resolved to put the patience of his enemies to the test ; notwithstanding their rapidity of movement and their courage they had no experience of a winter campaign.

Antony  
resolves upon  
retreat.

Exhausted as was the Roman army, Phraates also grew uneasy at the days grew shorter and Antony displayed no intention of raising the siege.‡ Phraates would not risk a battle and eventually had recourse to the perfidious device so successfully adopted by the Surena ; he spread reports among the wearied soldiers that the Parthian king was ready to conclude an honourable peace if Antony would meet his wishes. Foraging detachments no longer encountered armed and hostile troops, but quiet bands of horsemen, who approached with demonstrations of friendship while their officers attempted to begin conversation, telling them that the Parthians were anxious for peace. This news soon ran through the wearied army and was hailed with extreme delight ; Antony himself was shaken for the moment ; doubting the good faith of the enemy, he opened an inquiry into the truth of the current rumours and eventually offered Phraates terms of peace if he would restore the standards and the prisoners taken from Crassus. As he could not conquer Persia and would not return home empty handed, he required these poor symbols of military honour. Phraates returned a refusal and said that he would undertake not to harass the retreat if Antony would retire without delay ; but would make no further concession.§ The town maintained an obstinate resistance, the soldiers were exhausted, winter was approaching and the task of procuring supplies

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 40 ; Dion, xlix. 26.

† Dion, xlix. 26-27.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 40 ; Dion, xlix. 27.

§ Plutarch, *Ant.* 40.



became increasingly difficult. Apart from retreat there were but two alternatives open to Antony; he might spend the winter in the snow before the town or attempt some bold stroke and retire to a distance in search of provisions and shelter in the possibility of forcing a decisive battle.\* Antony saw the exhaustion and despondency of his troops and perhaps remembered the empire in its death throes calling for his guidance and ready to believe in his destruction at the news of the smallest reverse. Towards the end of October he accepted the proposals of Phraates and gave orders for retreat.

Phraates, however, proposed to repeat the treachery of the Surena and to harass the retiring enemy without mercy; his designs might have succeeded, had they not somehow been suspected by Antony before his departure. He therefore resolved not to follow the route by which he had come, but to choose a more mountainous path, almost impossible to cavalry. This may have been the route which now passes through Tabriz and meets the Araxes at Julfa. Phraates, however, did not wholly abandon his project and on the third day began to harass the Roman army during its perilous march of twenty-four days. Danger and privation, however, evoked in Antony for the last time his undeniable powers of leadership. Ever ready to hasten with supports wherever the army was threatened by the mobile enemy, either in front or in the rear, encouraging his men by words and by example, gaily sharing every danger and every privation, he maintained the courage of his troops. Though provisions were exhausted and the soldiers subsisted for a time on roots and brackish water, the army resisted, not only the constant attacks, but the far more dangerous and insidious peace proposals which had destroyed the army of Crassus. In vain did the enemy promise to cease their onslaughts if the Roman army would abandon the barren and exhausting mountain routes for the well watered and fertile plains. Deaf to these deceitful promises, united, ever ready to fight, even making counter-attacks upon the enemy from time to time, the Roman army brought the eagles safely across the Araxes. Twenty thousand

The perils of  
the retreat.

\* Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, ii. Paris, 1904, p. 200.



36 B.C. legionaries or auxiliary troops and four thousand cavalry had perished in the course of the expedition. If Antony had failed in the task of conquering Media, Phraates had been unable to repeat the massacre of Carrhæ.\*

The causes of  
Antony's  
failure.

Antony, remembering Cæsar's example, sent a report of his expedition to the Senate, announcing a complete success.† No doubt he lied with the habitual effrontery of the politicians of the age; granting, however, that his account was false, the judgment passed upon the expedition by ancient and modern historians has been unduly severe.‡ Antony committed but one real blunder, when he allowed Phraates to seize his siege train. In other respects it must be admitted that the strategical plan was magnificent in its design and excellently conceived; nor is this surprising, since Cæsar was its author. It must be admitted that Antony showed much audacity in beginning the enterprise, that his preparations were most carefully made and that he gave proof of great energy and activity during his leadership of so numerous a force. He had made a march of enormous length with rapidity and without a check, and had succeeded in bringing his army into safety after a most difficult retreat of some three hundred miles. He had indeed been unable to capture Phraaspa or to force the Parthian army to an engagement which he would have won, but it may be asked whether others, even Cæsar himself, would have been more successful. We can give neither denial nor affirmation with any confidence. Cæsar himself was almost beaten in his war with Vercingetorix because he could not induce the

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 41-50; Dion, xlix. 28-31.

† Dion, xlix. 32.

‡ Cp. the fine defence by Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxi. p. 90 ff.; M. Bouché Leclercq, in his *Histoire des Lagides*, adheres more nearly to the traditional account. He says (ii. p. 259) that Antony committed an "initial error" in leaving Syria too late, and that this mistake increased the consequences of the other "yet more grievous mistake which he committed in embarking upon an adventure without due consideration of the risk. Such a general as Alexander would have extricated himself by some bold stroke to atone for his foolishness, without looking behind him." This may be true, but we should remember that Alexander had no need to look behind him; his rear was not disturbed by so tremendous a *coup d'état* as the triumvirate and the proscriptions. It should be remembered that Antony had only a revolutionary army with which to conduct this war.



enemy to give battle by besieging his towns. His eventual triumph was due to the fact that an engagement was forced upon the enemy, not by himself but by the political situation in Gaul. In any case, granting that Antony made mistakes, the true reason for his failure is to be sought in the political situation of the Roman empire and in those incidental difficulties for which no human foresight could have provided. The Parthian army was much stronger than any of the other eastern armies defeated by Lucullus and Pompey ; the distance of the enterprise added greatly to its difficulties and the conquest of Persia was an undertaking of wholly different nature from the conquest of Pontus or Syria. Success in such an effort was impossible for Rome under the prevailing political and social confusion. It may be asserted with some show of reason that the army collected by Antony, one of the greatest ever set on foot by Rome, should have been adequate under normal conditions, to make a successful advance to the Persian capital, if not definitely to subjugate the whole of the great Persian empire. But we must remember that Antony was making his attempt in the middle of a revolution with inadequate supplies of money and an army recruited for the civil war, in which patriotism and discipline were not likely to be leading features. His position was utterly different from that of Bonaparte. Bonaparte began a revolution after a series of brilliant victories abroad ; Antony required victories to justify a revolutionary measure already carried through, the triumvirate, and his only implement was a revolutionary army, demoralised and utterly devoid of patriotism. With more money and more time he would probably have been successful ; had he been able to rest his troops in Armenia during that year, to conquer Media the next spring and to wait a year before invading Persia, all might have been well. His failure was due to the hurry, both of the invasion and of the retreat, and this mistake was due not to his desire to return to Cleopatra, as the ancient historians assert, but because the result of the revolution and of the civil wars demanded a victory in the briefest possible space. He had no real hold on the power gained by the revolution ; his governmental machinery was inadequate ; he was obliged to keep in

36 B.C.    touch both with Italian and eastern affairs and was reduced to the dangerous expedient of the Egyptian marriage to procure the necessary resources for the war ; so complicated and difficult an enterprise as the conquest of Persia required three or four years for its successful completion and Antony had not so much time to give. The expense would have been beyond his means ; his soldiers, who were despots in time of civil war, would not have submitted to so lengthy a campaign ; no one could tell what might have become of the Roman empire during so long an absence. Thus Antony's failure was due, not so much to his strategical incapacity as to the political situation in the Roman world. Cæsar's project was perhaps feasible in March 44 ; ten years later it was not so. The power of Rome had been too deeply undermined by the ravages of revolution.



## CHAPTER III

### ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Deposition of Lepidus—Octavianus' change of front—Outward and personal causes of the change—Weakness and discredit of the triumvirate—Political effects of the failure in Persia—The concessions of Octavianus to public opinion—His moderate and pacific policy—Antony on his return from Persia—The first Illyrian campaign of Octavianus—The death of Sextus Pompeius—Great projects and small events—Antony and Cleopatra—The Dalmatian war and the conquest of Armenia.

AFTER dismissing the Asiatic contingents and leaving the greater part of his soldiers in Armenia, Antony returned to Syria without delay ; \* there he learnt of the events which had taken place in Italy after the flight of Sextus Pompeius. Not only had Octavianus taken Sicily from Sextus Pompeius, but he had also taken Africa with its legions from Lepidus ; the triumvirate was at an end, as the removal of Lepidus now made it a duumvirate ; Antony's colleague had thus an unexpected counterpoise to his own acquisition of Egypt. The course of events had been strangely precipitate. After the flight of Sextus, his eight legions were besieged at Messina by Agrippa, and Lepidus had opened negotiations with the two generals ; Agrippa had requested them to wait while he submitted their proposals to Octavianus, who was at Naulochus ; Lepidus, however, had agreed to accept their surrender and had induced them to

The deposition  
of Lepidus.

\* See Plutarch, *Ant.* 51, and Dion, *xlix.* 31, concerning the distribution of thirty-five drachmæ per head, which Antony made to his legionaries, and concerning Cleopatra's financial help. The scantiness of the gift and the rumours that the money was supplied by Cleopatra, confirm the fact that Antony was in want of money and that financial difficulties were the chief reason for his alliance with Egypt.

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take service under himself by a promise that they should sack Messina in conjunction with his own soldiers.\* Thus finding himself at the head of twenty-two legions, Lepidus had thought himself able to avenge his past humiliations by forcing Octavianus to leave him in possession of Sicily and to restore the provinces which he had held at the outset of the triumvirate. For the moment every one thought that a new civil war would break out in Sicily. Octavianus, however, had induced the legions of Lepidus to revolt; they had no great opinion of their leader, and expected to improve their position under Octavianus; Lepidus, thus abandoned by his troops, might think himself fortunate that he was not put to death. However, Octavianus could not venture to execute the *pontifex maximus*, and Lepidus retired into private life at Rome for the peaceful enjoyment of the great wealth which he had amassed during his triumvirate.† The fleet surrendered without delay; Statilius Taurus had easily subjugated Sicily,‡ upon which an indemnity of sixteen hundred talents was laid.§ Octavianus also took possession of the *latifundia* in the interior of Sicily, which belonged to the knights proscribed in the year 43.

The position of  
Octavianus.

Immediately afterwards, a great revolt had broken out among the legions; their pay had long been in arrears, and they were exasperated by the meagre instalments and the promises with which the quæstors attempted to put them off. Octavianus, however, had been able to satisfy them by fresh promises, though there was no guarantee that he would be able to fulfil these any more than his earlier engagements.|| Hence, notwithstanding this difficulty, Cæsar's son had every right to regard himself as the greatest favourite of fortune the world had known since Alexander; never before had a young man of twenty-seven been seen in command of forty-three legions, a powerful cavalry force, and a fleet of six hundred ships,¶ master of an empire including much of Northern Africa, Spain, Gaul, Illyria and Italy, and wielding almost absolute power in a

\* Appian, B. C. v. 122; Dion, xlix. 11.

† Appian, B. C. v. 123-126; Dion, xlix. 12; Velleius, ii. 80.

‡ Orosius, VI. xviii. 32.

§ Appian, B. C. v. 129.

|| Dion, xlix. 13-14; Appian, B. C. v. 129; Orosius VI. xviii. 33.

¶ Appian, B. C. v. 127.



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decaying republic. No wonder that every politician in Rome, upon hearing the result of the Sicilian campaign, hastened to express his warmest admiration and his most profound devotion for Cæsar's son ; no wonder that the Senate, at a loss for further flattery, after granting Octavianus the highest honours, decreed that he might confer any distinctions he pleased upon himself.\* The sympathy of Italy had always been for Pompey ; the country had long hoped for his success, and had bitterly regretted his defeat.† Sympathy and regret, however, could not alter the accomplished facts of the battles of Mylæ and Naulochus and the fall of Lepidus. Octavianus was strong, and in revolutions strength is everything ; he was universally feared. Hitherto he had been a proud and suspicious tyrant, false, treacherous and malicious to his foes ; there had been some improvement since his marriage with Livia and his struggle with Sextus Pompeius, but there was obviously every reason to expect a revival of his tyrannical ferocity, now that he was no longer threatened by the existence of a popular rival. Consequently the horde of needy and ambitious politicians who had swarmed into the government considered that the wisest policy was to flatter this truculent conqueror and to anticipate his every wish.

These views were utterly mistaken, and this lavish flattery was practically unnecessary. Italy had expected some fresh outbreak of violence surpassing that which had followed the battle of Philippi or the sack of Perugia ; to her profound astonishment Cæsar's formidable son adopted a mode of conduct which revived memories of the old Pompey, the object of popular veneration. Before entering Rome he assembled the people without the pomerium and, in a long speech, explained what he had done.‡ This was an act of no importance in itself, but it revived memories of the best period of the State, when magistrates and not tyrants were in power. No sooner had he entered the city on November 13 § than he proclaimed what

Octavianus' sudden change of attitude.

\* Appian, B. C. v. 130 ; Dion, xlix. 15.

† Cp. the words of Velleius, II. lxxix. 6, upon the inexorable hatred to which Titius, Antony's governor, was exposed, because he was regarded as responsible for his death.

‡ Dion, xlix. 15.

§ C. I. L. i. pp. 461 and 478.



36 B.C. would now be called a fiscal amnesty, remitting such part of the contributions ordered by the triumvirs as had not been paid. This remission, it is true, affected arrears which could not possibly be collected, but if it brought no advantage to the people, it at any rate made a good impression and raised hopes that the era of crushing taxation was drawing to a close.\* Octavianus also abolished certain unimportant taxes; † he circulated an account of his expeditions, intended to prove that his conquest of Sicily had been undertaken to make a final end of civil war; ‡ he appointed as additional augur a proscribed nobleman of high birth, Valerius Messala Corvinus; § he passed a law forbidding the rich to wear the senatorial purple; || in short, instead of the acts of vengeance and outrage which all had apprehended, none but acts and words of conciliation were forthcoming, of which the young and impetuous triumvir was regarded as almost incapable. It seemed that there was room for hope and that the terrible epoch of violence and illegality was drawing to its close. In the light of past experience, few would venture to believe in the sincerity of the triumvir. Nor is it doubtful that these measures were largely dictated by reasons of statecraft. There was, however, more in them than the calculations of short-sighted political cunning; they marked the outset of a change of character and policy which caused universal astonishment and was regarded as a prodigy past belief, but which, none the less, had been for some time latent both in Octavianus himself and in the course of events.

Causes of this  
change.

This change of character and policy is of such importance to the life of Octavianus and to the history of his age that the motives and circumstances which produced it demand careful consideration. Octavianus was not a great man of action endowed with vehement passions such as Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon, whose successes did but increase their ambition, their audacity, their energy, the vigour of their imagination, the ruthlessness of their temper and the keenness of their sensuality. His health was precarious and his constitution feeble; he was no athlete;

\* Appian, B. C. v. 130; Dion, xlix. 15.

† Dion, xlix. 15.

§ Dion, xlix. 16.

‡ Appian, B. C. v. 130.

|| *Ibid.*



impressionable and somewhat timid; he resembled Cicero rather than Cæsar; he was, indeed, by nature a man of letters, fitted for sedentary work and for slow and careful reflection, possessing not so much overwhelming energy as cold intellectual power. If he could not be heroic in adversity, he could be prudent in prosperity, and the increase of his wealth and power induced him rather to consider the means of preserving what he had won than the possibility of staking it in the hope of further acquisition. Profound intellectual power is rarely associated with such a temperament, for genius is nearly always vehement and impulsive; but to his cold and calculating character Octavianus united a powerful intellect, and might have become an illustrious writer or philosopher under such conditions as brought forth the great orator of Arpinum. But the course of events had swept him into the turmoil of civil war while still young; he had been forced to face danger, to wield power and to hold positions entirely beyond his strength, his courage or his capacity; the result had been to stimulate every one of his bad qualities, his ambition, his rancour, his sensuality and his avarice, to make of him a precocious tyrant, fierce, greedy, revengeful and jealous. These, however, were the temporary aberrations of a weak character, exposed to overwhelming danger and crushed by over-burdening responsibility. He was naturally of a moderate temperament, caring little for luxury or dissipation, economical, and managing his property with a thrift which reminds us of his relative, the usurer of Velletri; for the moment his chief desire was not to heap up further wealth, but to reach the day when warfare would be at an end and when he might pay all the debts of the triumvirate. Cæsar had recklessly contracted enormous debts; but financial cares, the soldiers' arrears of pay and other troubles of the kind deprived Octavianus of his peace of mind and disturbed his sleep. He had received every magistracy and every honour, had been given a triumph and a gilded statue in the forum; he had but to express a wish to become *pontifex maximus*, and the people would immediately deprive Lepidus of this office,\* but his reserved nature was untouched by

\* Appian, B. C. v. 1311



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vanity, and if he did not care to obey, he had no desire to command and wished for no new honours; his paramount anxiety was to be rid of the appalling nightmares which had poisoned his life for the last ten years, revolts in Italy, mutinies in the army, treachery among his friends, civil and foreign wars. The object of his ambition was a situation not more brilliant, but more stable and permanent, where he would be no longer exposed to the constant vicissitudes of fortune. Thus he was naturally drawn to conservative views on such subjects as luxury, wealth, business, ambition and corruption, views which the upper classes in Italy had acquired from Cicero, whose works Octavianus had read and admired,\* although he had been a party to the orator's murder.

The discredit  
of the  
triumvirate.

Even amid the greatest prosperity such a man would not be intoxicated by success or forget the terrible dangers from which fortune had preserved him; he would have striven to avoid exposure to any further mischances of the kind. We can thus more easily understand the change manifest in Octavianus for the reason that his prosperity was very far from certain, and notwithstanding his hardly-won triumph in Sicily he must have felt that his apparent power was weak, unstable and open to attack. He had overthrown a formidable rival in the person of Sextus, but he knew that Italy had regretted the result of the war and that his victory had increased, if possible, the popular hatred of the triumvirate. The causes of this universal hatred were too serious and long standing to be eradicated by the defeat of a popular rival. The triumvirate had been put to the test, and concerning its failure there could be no illusions. One great exploit had been attempted by Antony, the conquest of Persia, but notwithstanding his optimistic despatches whispers of failure were in circulation. Octavianus had spent six long years since the battle of Philippi in the conquest of Sicily and the defeat of his family enemy. Neither he nor Antony had done anything whatever worthy of public admiration; they had not a single reform or conquest or great public work to their credit; they had not even maintained the most necessary governmental functions at Rome,

\* Cp. the anecdote of Plutarch, *Cic.* 49, which refers to a later date.



though these had been sufficiently incompetent before the revolution. The multiplication of offices had proceeded apace, and the Senate now included nearly twelve hundred senators; yet no one could be found to act as *ædile*, to hold the office responsible for the most important public institutions and for the material comfort of Rome, an office which necessitated much expenditure and brought little gain.\* Italy had been wasted with fire and sword and separated from the east; Roman society had been shaken to its depths, the State reduced to bankruptcy and its venerable constitution outraged; public business had been thrown into indescribable confusion, and all to give lands to five or six thousand of Cæsar's veterans and to provide a few thousand obscure plebeians with seats in the Senate or with official posts. Tragical and indeed ridiculous was the wild disproportion between the miserable results of the policy of the triumvirs and the exceptional powers conferred upon them by the veterans and the legions in a brief fit of fury during the year 43. Had Antony's expedition been successful and Persia been added to the Roman empire, this disproportion would have seemed more reasonable, but in that case Antony might have monopolised the credit reflected upon the triumvirate government.

Antony was a further cause of anxiety to Octavianus. To the personal interests of Octavianus Antony's triumph would have been just as dangerous as, for other reasons, his defeat actually was. His marriage with Cleopatra might be followed by his divorce from Octavia; he might attack Octavianus to avenge the affront laid upon him at Tarentum. The two triumvirs had often been within an ace of rupture, and if Antony retained any ill-feeling, the result of the Sicilian campaign was not likely to improve his temper. Octavianus offered public sacrifices to the gods for the success of Antony's expedition,† as he did not care to be suspected of unpatriotic motives, but he must have fervently hoped in his heart that his colleague would experience a crushing reverse. In any case, he realised that if Persia was not conquered neither he nor Antony could delude themselves with the belief that they were objects of admiration

Embarrassments of Octavianus.

\* Dion, xlix. 16.

† *Ibid.* xlix. 32.



36 B.C. in Italy. Nor did it seem that their numerous legions would inspire the same fear as before. The Cæsarean enthusiasm of the soldiers, which had been a large factor in the revolutionary triumphs of 43, was growing cold; disillusionment, long service and large arrears of pay had produced a sullen despondency. The many promises to the new recruits in the war of Modena had not yet been paid in full.\* Thus, though the triumvirs had plunged Italy and the empire into confusion for the soldiers, discontent had been the result, and the loyalty of the legions was at present a very doubtful quantity, as the recent revolt had shown. To crown his embarrassments, it was becoming as difficult to keep the soldiers under arms as to disband them. Octavianus had already consented to disband eight legions, including those which Decimus had recruited in the year 43, and which had served only nine years. He had the utmost difficulty in maintaining thirty-five legions, and to keep forty-three under arms was out of the question. Land, however, must be found for the disbanded soldiers; yet he could not venture upon a fresh confiscation, as in the year 42, and had no money for land-purchase. Disbandment was thus a most difficult question. These huge armies recruited by either side during the madness which preceded the civil war were becoming a most serious encumbrance to the victorious party under whose leadership they came. Finally, if Sextus Pompeius had been conquered, he was not dead and continued to give Octavianus serious trouble. In the autumn of 36 he had fled from Sicily; he stopped at the Lacinian promontory and pillaged the temple of Juno; thus provided with money, he had gone to Lesbos and established himself at Mytilene, which town his father had formerly declared free; there Antony's governors allowed him to collect forces and to begin the organisation of a new army. The general situation was so uncertain and Pompey's name was so popular in every quarter that even the leading members of his brother-in-law's party would not venture to begin any action whatever against his mortal enemy which might hinder his preparations for revenge.† Further-

\* Appian, B. C. v. 129.

† *Ibid.* v. 133; Dion, xlix. 17.



more, since the violent deposition of Lepidus the triumvirate no longer rested upon any sound legal basis, as it had been arbitrarily changed to a duumvirate; this would have been a matter of no importance had the coalition been in any degree popular, but it was a real danger to a discredited and disunited government.

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Octavianus had therefore realised after his victory that concessions must be made to public opinion and satisfaction given to the upper classes and to the rising forces of conservative feeling in order to restore some popularity to the name of Cæsar. Cicero's treatise *De Officiis*, and the advice of Didymus Areus, the master of Octavianus, who preached the temperate and ascetic doctrines of the Neo-Pythagorean sect to which he belonged, probably influenced this great political change of front. Octavianus did not confine himself to these immediate measures; he undertook the partial restoration of the republic and restored to various magistrates certain powers which the triumvirs had usurped; \* he was careful not to infringe the interests of the landholders who had been the chief sufferers hitherto, and in spite of all difficulties he provided for the twenty thousand soldiers whom he disbanded without recourse to confiscation. He was not now dealing with Cæsar's soldiers who had fought several years in Gaul, but with troops of more recent standing who had known the dictator little or not at all, and could therefore be forced to accept smaller holdings, not necessarily in the best part of Italy. Octavianus gave them lands just beyond the Italian frontier in Gallia Narbonensis, at Beterræ (Béziers) and in other provinces; † the land distributed in Italy was not seized but purchased. Amongst it was the vast municipal domain of Capua, the revenues of which were used by the town for public purposes. Octavianus induced the inhabitants to exchange this domain for some rich territory which the republic held in Crete near Cnossus; this was to be handed over to the town of Capua, and would produce an income estimated at 12,000,000 sesterces, sufficient

Octavianus  
concessions to  
public opinion.

\* Appian, B. C. v. 132.

† Dion, xlix. 34; cp. Kromayer in *Hermes*, xxxi. pp. 14 and 15; Hygin. ed. Lachmann, p. 177.

36 B.C. for the municipal requirements.\* He also restored to their owners the numerous merchant ships which had been requisitioned by himself or by Sextus during the war.† Even then the army was too numerous for his resources, and he proceeded to dispose of the eight legions of Sextus Pompeius in a manner which, if disloyal, was cheap and popular with the Italian middle classes. As we have seen, these legions were largely composed of slaves from the *latifundia* of Sicily and of fugitive slaves from Italy; to all of these the treaty of Misenum had granted liberty. Oblivious of this promise, Octavianus disbanded these legions, and ordered that all fugitive slaves who could be discovered should be restored to their masters; at the same time he restored all the slaves found in the fleet. Some thirty thousand were thus sent back to slavery.‡ Military expenditure and pensions were considerably reduced, and the Italian upper classes received a fine present when they thus recovered property which they had deemed lost for ever.

Further  
measures.

Octavianus then proposed to suppress brigandage throughout Italy and crimes of violence at Rome by the institution of a kind of police, the *cohortes vigilum*, probably an imitation of the Egyptian force of police.§ He further proposed to build a great temple to Apollo with a fine portico on the Palatine,|| to provide work for the neglected poor of Rome. The old temples were falling into ruin, while the new buildings under construction, such as the temples of Cæsar and of Mars Vindicator on the Capitol, advanced very slowly owing to the want of money and the prevailing unrest. None the less this additional temple was proposed. At the same time Octavianus bought several houses adjoining his own on the Palatine, in order to increase the size and comfort of his own residence.¶ To show that the legions were not merely intended to support the tyranny of the triumvirs, he resolved to undertake a series of expeditions against the barbaric tribes of the Alps and of

\* Velleius, ii. 81; Dion, xlix. 14.

† Appian, B. C. v. 127.

‡ Mon. Anc. (*Lat.*), v. 1; Appian, B. C. v. 131.

§ Appian, B. C. v. 132. But this only refers to a project executed much later.

|| Velleius, ii. 81; Dion, xlix. 15; Mon. Anc. (*Lat.*), iv. 1.

¶ Velleius, ii. 81.



Illyria, who lived in a state of semi-independence, continually harassing the dwellers on the plains and on the coasts. In this matter he might be thought to be continuing his father's pro-consular policy. Finally he caused the utmost surprise by delivering a great speech in which he asserted his readiness to lay down his power as triumvir and to restore the republic as soon as he could secure an agreement with Antony; he asserted that Antony would doubtless consent, as the civil wars had been finished, and with them every reason for the triumvirate's existence.\* Historians have regarded this speech as a snare for Antony, but Octavianus may very possibly have realised that the question of concluding the coalition must be faced. The triumvirate could not last for ever, and some issue would one day have to be found from the impossible situation by which the republic was hampered; the abolition of exceptional power was inevitable, and it might well seem prudent to confront the question at once. In any case, it is certain that Octavianus pursued a better policy, as his character improved and he slowly corrected some of his worst vices. Upon this occasion he gave Agrippa a magnificent reward for his victory, granting him unusual honours and large estates in Sicily, taken from those which belonged to the knights proscribed in the year 43.† Wishing to sound Antony's intentions and to give him a pledge of friendship, Octavianus sent him at the beginning of the year 35 two thousand picked men and enough munitions of war to compensate for the ships destroyed off the Sicilian coast, and commissioned Octavia to conduct this troop. This was the cleverest means of making Antony understand that he wished their relationship and the peace to continue; it was also the best means of forcing him to declare which woman was his real wife, to proclaim his royalty by declaring for Cleopatra, or to receive Octavia as his lawful wife and break

\* Appian, B. C. v. 132.

† Horace, *Ep.* I. xii. 1 ff., tells us that Agrippa had much property in Sicily. This could hardly have come to him by inheritance from Atticus, for we do not know that Atticus held any lands in Sicily; it is therefore probable that it was proscribed property. Hence the conjecture that it was given after the conquest of Sicily as a reward for his victories.



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off his alliance with Egypt. Italy could not but be grateful to him when he thus cleverly, without giving provocation, destroyed the equivocal nature of the Antioch marriage. Such great moderation was speedily rewarded. Shortly after his return to Rome his person was made sacrosanct and he received all the other privileges of the tribunes.\*

Antony's  
measures after  
the Parthian  
campaign.

These friendly advances to Antony were a happy idea and were opportunely made. In the Persian expedition Antony had failed to secure that decisive success which would have justified his policy, and difficulties of every kind now demonstrated to him the danger of such rash expedients as he had adopted. His reverse, magnified by public rumour, had disturbed the system of kingdoms and principalities which he had organised in the fickle east; consequently, during the winter of 36-35, Sextus Pompeius had been able to form plans for the overthrow of Antony, relying upon the reputation of his name in the east. He began secret negotiations with the kings of Armenia, Pontus and Parthia, collected ships, recruited soldiers and appeared at Lampsacus on the continent. Pompey's name was still so influential that he found soldiers even among the colonists whom Cæsar had settled in those parts. He then attempted to capture Cyzicus, and began a war in Bithynia, forcing Antony to send Titius, the governor of Syria, against him with some legions and a fleet.† On the other hand, the failure of Antony's expedition had made his extraordinary power yet more hateful to the Italian public, while Octavianus, who was established in that country with increased power, would be likely to resent his marriage with Cleopatra. For all these reasons Antony was ready to welcome the friendly overtures of Octavianus, and not only accepted, at any rate in outward seeming, the changes which his colleague had made for his own advantage in the triumvirate, but even thought of sending to him L. Bibulus, the son of the famous consul, who had been Cæsar's colleague, with a friendly message offering help for his Illyrian expedition.‡ Unfortunately Cleopatra

\* Appian, B. C. v. 132; Dion, xlix. 15; Orosius, VI. xviii. 34. Cp. Mommsen, *Res Gestæ Divi Augusti* (first edition), p. 28.

† Appian, B. C. v. 133-139; Dion, xlix. 17 and 18.

‡ Appian, B. C. v. 132.



stood between the brothers-in-law, and Antony's eastern policy had produced such complications that only the utmost conciliation could have secured the interests of peace and of Italy. Antony realised that he could not allow the unfavourable impression created by his failure to remain in Italy and in the east, and that his prestige must be re-established by some success. While he was occupied in suppressing the revolt of Sextus he was also busy increasing his legions and sending recruiting agents to Italy and Asia.

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His failure, however, had brought home to him the difficulties of the enterprise which he had hoped to accomplish with the help of Cæsar's plans. It was hardly possible to ask the legions or the eastern princes to repeat the vast effort they had already made. It was equally impossible to extort the necessary funds from Egypt for a second attempt, when the huge expenditure upon the first had been utterly unproductive. Egypt was governed by an absolute monarch, but was no mere tool to be used at pleasure for any whim. The interests of the country were chiefly devoted to wealth, art, science and pleasure; money was required to pay the artists and scientific men, to build temples and palaces, to construct canals, to hold festivals and increase the number of the officials, and no funds would be forthcoming for the conquest of a distant empire in which no one felt the smallest interest. Recent events must have increased the hatred of the upper classes for Cleopatra and her government; marriage with a Roman proconsul was a very unusual event even for the dynastic policy of the east. One most serious obstacle remained; Cleopatra, who had never favoured the Persian expedition, though she had acquiesced in order to secure her marriage with Antony, was now anxious to turn the failure to her own advantage; she wished Antony to abandon the enterprise and to retire from so equivocal a position. He was no longer to be king of Egypt in secret and Roman proconsul in public, but should divorce Octavia, declare himself the husband of Cleopatra and the sovereign of the country, and extend the empire of Egypt. The failure of the Persian campaign was the sole reason which offered any prospect of success for this policy.

Antony's  
equivocal  
position.



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Cleopatra understood that if Antony had been able to conquer the Parthians he would have had no further need of the Egyptian alliance. She must therefore seize her opportunity, dissuade Antony from any renewal of the undertaking and turn his thoughts to the project of a great Egyptian empire. Thus she would be able to justify her policy and her marriage with Antony to her people. Egypt was a decadent country, with no love of war, but with every desire for any outward show of power and strength which could be had without expenditure or heavy effort. Egypt would have welcomed an extension of the empire secured at no other cost than the efforts of its fair queen.\* In short, Antony realised that as he had attempted the conquest of Persia he was bound to succeed in the enterprise; but circumstances were far less favourable than before, his hopes of success had diminished and his obstinacy had begun to waver. Pompey, at any rate, must be crushed before anything else could be done.

The first  
Illyrian  
campaign of  
Octavianus.

In the spring of 35, the gentle Octavia, who would gladly have remained in quiet seclusion, occupied with the education of her children, prepared to start for the east at the head of two thousand men;† at the same date the Illyrian war began. A fleet apparently under the command of Agrippa sailed up the Adriatic from south to north, drove the pirates out of their retreats, expelled the barbarian populations from the little islands upon the Dalmatian and Pannonian coasts and captured the vessels of the Liburni, together with their able-bodied men, who were famous shepherds and fetched a high price as slaves.‡ Meanwhile, in the north of Italy the army marched upon Trieste, and there divided into two bodies; one of these advanced northwards against the barbarian Carni and Taurisci, while the other went south-east, in the direction of Senia (Segna). It was probably at Senia that the fleet and army met.§ Octavianus started from Senia with a considerable

\* See Appendix.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 53.

‡ Appian, *Ill.* 16. Cp. Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxiii. p. 4. That Agrippa commanded the fleet is a further conjecture on his part. Vulic, *Contributi alla guerra di Ottavio in Illiria*, Padua, 1903, 2 ff., contests this hypothesis of Kromayer, and gives ingenious arguments, but the want of documentary evidence makes decision difficult.

§ Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxiii. p. 4.



force, and invaded the country which is now Croatia and was then occupied by a mixed population, generally known as Iapides; he successively crushed the Mentini (Modrush?), the Avendeati, the Arupini (Otochacz\*), and also the remaining Iapides of remoter regions, from whom he captured two towns, Terpone and Metune, the sites of which are unknown.† He then entered that district of modern Croatia known to the ancients as Pannonia, and ravaged the country to the walls of the largest village community, which was known as Siscia (Siszeg), situated at the confluence of the Culpa and of the Save; after a siege of thirty days he captured the place, but lost Menodorus, the former admiral of Pompeius, who had accompanied him, and was now killed in a skirmish.‡ Thus the enterprise was entirely successful, and brought in a considerable amount of slaves, money and ships. This success aroused sanguine hopes among the friends of Octavianus, and while he was leaving Illyria to take up his winter quarters in Gaul discussion dwelt upon the possibility of conquering the kingdom of the Daci on the further bank of the Danube in modern Hungary; it was also thought that he might conquer Britain, where Cæsar had done no more than land, and in a word, perform all the projects which were attributed, rightly or wrongly, to the dictator.§

While Octavianus was campaigning in the wilds of Illyria Antony had conquered Sextus and had put him to death, though in a manner which gave reason to suppose that the execution was due to some mistake in the transmission of orders concerning him. Thus Antony hoped to escape the hatred which Italy would bear to the man who destroyed the family of Pompeius.|| Antony then took over the three legions of Sextus, and thus repaired in some small degree the losses of his Persian campaign. No sooner was this danger averted than he

Cleopatra's  
ascendency  
over Antony.

\* Appian, *Ill.* 16; Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxiii. p. 4.

† Dion, xlix. 35; Appian, *Ill.* 18-21; Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxiii. p. 5, n. 3.

‡ Dion, xlix. 37; Appian, *Ill.* 22-24.

§ Cp. Dion, xlix. 38.

|| Dion, xlix. 18; Appian, *B. C.* v. 140-144. In my opinion this is the most reasonable explanation of the obscurity of this business, which was not clear even to the ancient historians.



35 B.C. was confronted by other and more complex difficulties, due to his increasing indecision and to the growing tension between Cleopatra and himself. In the spring of 35 the prospects of a fresh expedition to Persia seemed to become highly favourable. The King of Pontus, who had been captured during the massacre of the Roman rearguard upon its march to the Median capital, brought to Alexandria an extraordinary proposal from the King of Media, suggesting an alliance against the Parthian king.\* These former allies had quarrelled over the plunder taken from the Romans, and were ready to begin hostilities. Antony was delighted by this unexpected proposal, which offered an opportunity for a much easier and shorter journey to Persia; his enthusiasm for the Parthian campaign revived, and he was anxious to hasten to Armenia without loss of time to conclude the alliance and prepare for war.† Cleopatra, however, was already disturbed by Octavia's voyage, and was even more alarmed by this proposed alliance. Her influence and her prospects of success would be shattered if Antony were involved in a fresh war with Persia and if Octavia could secure an interview with him. As she could not keep him back, she requested and gained permission to accompany him; this was a serious mistake upon Antony's part, as she employed every device upon the journey by which a clever woman could influence a character rather impetuous than strong. The proud, joyful demeanour of a comrade sharing his power and his success was now gone; she was sad, appeared thin and pale, and acted the part of invalid; she never complained, but she took care that Antony should be constantly told by courtiers that the queen's health was failing because she feared to be abandoned, and that she had resolved to die if he left her irrevocably.‡ A certain Alexis of Laodicea seems

\* Dion, xlix. 33; Plutarch, *Ant.* 52.

† Dion, xlix. 33, says that in this year, after the embassy of Polemo, Antony started from Alexandria to make war upon the King of Armenia. It is obvious that he is confusing this and the following year; it is difficult to see what connection there could be between the Median king's offer of alliance and the war upon the king of Armenia. Cp. Plutarch, *Ant.* 52.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 53, says clearly that this comedy was intended to dissuade Antony from going to Media.



to have given her great help in this long pretence.\* Antony was by no means a strong character; his energy had suffered from his life of luxury and pleasure at the Egyptian court; he began to feel the influence of the clever and crafty queen as he had felt the influence of Fulvia; nor had he definitely resolved to attempt so desperate a venture as a Parthian campaign for the second time. Eventually he yielded, although Octavianus had made fresh overtures of friendship and had shown his anxiety to restore peace between his brother-in-law and Octavia by inducing the Senate to decree great honours to both of them after the death of Sextus.† Antony sent a message to Octavia at Athens, asking her not to attempt a meeting, as he was about to return to Persia;‡ he returned, however, to Alexandria, and postponed his enterprise till the following year.§ Cleopatra's triumph was complete.

35 B.C.

Thus the year 34 promised a great harvest of conquest; at the end of 35 attacks upon Persia, Great Britain and Dacia had been discussed in Italy and in the east. During the winter, however, these magnificent schemes dwindled very considerably. Octavianus considered that it was now his duty to pay some attention to the civil service, which had been woefully neglected,

Agrippa as  
ædile.\* Cp. Plutarch, *Ant.* 72.

† Dion, xlix. 18.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 53; Dion, xlix. 33.

§ Dion, xlix. 33. Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, ii. Paris, 1904, p. 269: "It is difficult to believe that Antony was really duped by this feminine strategy. He may not have been sufficiently sceptical or sufficiently modest to appreciate Cleopatra's acting, but he was well aware that he had to deal with a jealous woman, and that his absence would not have been regarded as abandonment if only Octavia had not been waiting a few days' sail from the Asiatic coast. This was no reason for abandoning an expedition which Cleopatra herself had considered opportune, or for embarrassing the Median king, who might be forced to face the Parthians in isolation if they heard of his alliance with the Romans. But after his sad experience of the previous year Antony feared a second eastern campaign more than he would admit even to himself, and was probably not sorry to find difficulties in his path. It immediately became obvious that his preparations were inadequate, and that the season was too far advanced. He could not repeat his former mistake and run the risk of being caught by winter in an enemy's country." These observations of the learned French historian are admirable. After reading them I have been convinced that the best explanation of Antony's conduct at this time is to suppose that he was not really anxious to begin a second expedition.



35 B.C.

and to calm the reasonable dissatisfaction of the public ; he therefore took measures to supply the scandalous want of ædiles, and appointed Agrippa to this office ; Agrippa was to enter upon his duties as soon as he could leave the responsibilities of the Illyrian war, and in spite of the fact that he had been consul. Agrippa, after receiving the gift of the Sicilian estates, lived in truly Roman simplicity, in strong contrast to the unbridled luxury of Mæcenas ; he might also expect to inherit the wealth of Atticus in no long time, as that financier was now extremely old. Thus he could easily perform the functions of all those ædiles who should have been appointed in recent years ; he was well able to provide for the requirements of the city and its population, and would certainly secure their admiration if he consented to leave his consular rank for a lower office and to expend part of his property upon the poor. At that moment, during the winter of 35-34, rumours of a Pannonian revolt reached Rome, and Octavianus therefore resolved to reduce the next year's programme to modest limits ; he would crush the Pannonian revolt if it had broken out, and afterwards, if time allowed, subdue the populations of Dalmatia, who continued a semi-independent existence.

Cleopatra's  
policy.

Cleopatra spent the same winter in the east with indefatigable cunning in the task of inducing Antony to abandon all idea of the Persian expedition, which at present was merely postponed. Unfortunately no author has told us what arguments she used for his persuasion. It may be conjectured that she pointed out the impossibility of burdening Egypt with the expense of so lengthy and formidable an enterprise as the conquest of Persia ; an attempt to raise the money might be followed by insurrections and revolutions ; Antony's object might be gained by longer but safer methods, and the following year should be devoted to the easier task of conquering Armenia. This country was nearer at hand than Persia ; the Armenian king had deserved this fate for his treachery in the year 36 ; his vast wealth would compensate for the losses of the first campaign, for which he was really responsible, and would be a great help in any future enterprise. In any case, it is certain that Cleopatra demanded with greater energy than before that



Antony should divorce Octavia, declare himself King of Egypt, and build up the old empire of the Pharaohs, with Egypt as its centre ; this empire was to be divided among their sons, and they would thus found a great Hellenic monarchy for their descendants, comparable to the foundations of Alexander. The Egyptian nation, intoxicated by this new splendour, would then open its treasury for the conquest of Persia.\* This advice was both bold and ingenious ; a great Egyptian empire was at least as valuable as the conquest of Persia—a difficult and hazardous enterprise. Italy was ruined and exhausted while Egypt offered every opportunity for a glorious career in the footsteps of Alexander. The triumvir, however, hesitated ; it seemed hardly possible to found a permanent empire upon a country in its decadence. Cleopatra then employed every means of persuasion in her power both as queen and as woman : she dazzled the triumvir with magnificent festivals and with a ceaseless round of amusements in infinite variety ; she made him prominent among the “inimitables,” the gilded youth of the court who professed sole knowledge of the supreme refinements of oriental sensuality ; † finally she strove to overcome the opposition of Antony’s Roman friends who had accompanied him to Alexandria. This was a further difficulty, which introduced fresh complications as Cleopatra’s intentions became more marked. The leading Romans in Antony’s suite had left their property, their families, their friends and their hearts in Italy ; they were willing to remain in the east in order to make their fortunes, but had no intention of settling in the country ; the idea of living permanently in a court of freedmen and eunuchs was repugnant to them ; they objected to Antony’s idea of divorcing Octavia, as this might involve a quarrel with his brother-in-law and a fresh civil war. The mere fact that Octavianus was established in Italy had withdrawn several of Antony’s friends, including Statilius Taurus, who preferred not to leave Rome. Cleopatra strove to retain as many of Antony’s friends in Egypt as possible ; to some she gave money, to others official posts ; one of them, a certain Ovinius, one of the many low-born senators

\* See Appendix.

† Cp. Plutarch, *Ant.* 28.



34 B.C.

created in those years, accepted the post of overseer of the queen's weaving manufactories.\* The majority of these friends, however, were obdurate, and whenever Cleopatra perceived that the case of any man was hopeless she overwhelmed him with insults and affronts, slandered him to Antony, and even strove to terrorise him by empty threats.† Thus a silent war continued between the two parties of Antony's friends, who were divided as the partisans and the opponents of the queen. Notwithstanding the zeal of the latter, Antony wavered more and more. His powers of penetration and his strength of will had been exhausted by a life of adventure, and now faded amid the continued intoxication of flattery, festival and luxury. Cleopatra succeeded during that winter in persuading him to attempt the conquest of Armenia in the year 34.

The Dalmatian  
war and the  
conquest of  
Armenia.

Thus the spring and the summer of the year 34 were spent in petty wars both in the east and in the west. Octavianus sent Messala Corvinus to subdue the Salassi, who held what is now the valley of Aosta; he himself went back to Illyria with an army to relieve Fufius Geminus, who had been surrounded and besieged in Siscia by the revolted Pannonians; upon the march, however, he heard that Fufius was free, as the barbarians had abandoned the siege in weariness. Octavianus then led his army along a narrow tongue of land which lies between the sea and the Dinaric Alps, to attack the barbarous and warlike peoples of Dalmatia.‡ Probably he also sent one of his generals into the valley of the Save with orders to follow the tributaries of that river and penetrate into the modern Bosnia and eastern Servia, where he was to make raids and receive the submission of the local tribes.§ Meanwhile Antony had left Alexandria in the spring, had rejoined his army at a short distance from Armenia, and to allay suspicion and to smooth the path for his enterprise had sent Dellius to the king with proposals for a

\* Orosius, VI. xix. 20.

† The facts reported by Plutarch, *Ant.* 59, though belonging to a later date, afford an idea of the manner in which Cleopatra harassed those of Antony's friends who opposed her designs.

‡ Dion, xlix. 38; Appian, *Ill.* 25-27.

§ Kromayer denies the fact, but Vulic, *op. cit.* p. 28 ff., makes certain objections of some weight. Here again we have a question where a final solution is impossible.



marriage contract between an Armenian princess and the young Alexander, the eldest of his children by Cleopatra. When he reached Nicopolis, in Armenia Minor, he invited the king to a meeting for discussion upon the Persian war. The monarch's suspicions were aroused, and he politely declined under different pretexts, but the Roman general advanced rapidly with his legions upon Artaxata ; he then renewed the invitation, and the king was obliged to accept. He was received with great honour, but kept in confinement ; Armenia was declared a Roman conquest, and the ministers were requested to hand over the royal treasures. They offered resistance, and the heir to the crown attempted to defend the kingdom. A short campaign resulted in a Roman victory and a general pillage of the country by the legions, who did not even spare the rich and venerable sanctuary of Anaitis in Acilisene. In this temple there was a statue of the goddess of pure gold, which the soldiers broke in pieces and divided.\* Antony then resumed negotiations with the king of Media for a marriage of the young Alexander with the king's daughter Iotapa ; the marriage was concluded, and Antony returned to Alexandria in the summer with the Armenian king, his family and his vast treasures, which included a great quantity of gold and silver.† Meanwhile Octavianus pursued the war against the Dalmatians.‡

\* Dion, xlix. 39-40 ; Orosius, VI. xix. 3. A probable conjecture is the theory that the temple referred to by Strabo, XI. xiv. 16, and Pliny, XXXIII. iv. 82, was pillaged at that time.

† Orosius, VI. xix. 3 : *magnam vim auri argentique*.

‡ Dion, xlix. 40.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NEW EGYPTIAN EMPIRE

The reconstitution of the Egyptian empire—Antony at Alexandria—Public feeling in Italy and its progressive changes—The second book of Horace's Satires—Octavianus opposes the Oriental policy of Antony—The ædileship of Agrippa; the Pantheon—Antony prepares for a further Parthian campaign—First indications of the coming struggle between Antony and Octavianus—Strained relations; Antony's intrigues against Octavianus—Antony interrupts his preparations for a Parthian campaign—His plans against Octavianus—Octavianus' final *coup d'état*—Antony concentrates the army at Ephesus—The festivities at Ephesus—Cleopatra follows Antony's army.

The  
reconstruc-  
tion of the  
Egyptian  
empire.

THE Armenian expedition had been not so much an actual conquest as a successful freebooting raid. With the gold and silver thus collected Antony would now be able to coin enormous sums of money, to pay his soldiers, make war and bribe senators, without drawing upon the wealth of Egypt. Thus he returned from Armenia delighted with his success,\* and resolved with the great resources at his disposal to recommence the attack upon Persia, the completion of which would make him master of the Roman world. Yet he would not make up his mind to break his dangerous alliance with the queen. On the contrary, he had definitely resolved to satisfy Cleopatra's most ardent wish and to found a new realm and a new dynasty in the east for his children by the queen. The success of the Armenian campaign had been partially due to Cleopatra's advice, and henceforward her influence over him seems to have been paramount; at the same time it is likely that though he had resolved upon a second Parthian campaign, Antony was

\* Orosius, VI. xix. 4: *qua elatus pecunia.* . . .



by no means assured of success, in view of his former defeat. He therefore wished to secure a refuge in case of failure and avoid the possibility of a disastrous return to Italy. He then entered Alexandria with a triumphal procession, "modelled upon the imposing ceremony which no city but Rome and its Capitol had yet witnessed." \* Immediately afterwards, during the autumn of 34, he issued a short document depriving Italy of a considerable part of the inheritance of Alexander the Great, for transference to his children by Cleopatra. The ceremony took place in the Gymnasium, a kind of huge park, full of buildings and porticoes, situated in the neighbourhood of the Museum and of the mausoleum of the Macedonian conqueror. Antony, Cleopatra, and their children, namely, Cleopatra and Alexander, the twins, aged six years, and Ptolemy, who was two years old,† appeared before the vast crowd with Cæsarion. They ascended a silver platform raised in the middle of the Gymnasium, on which stood two golden thrones for Antony and Cleopatra and smaller thrones for the children. Antony then proclaimed Cleopatra the queen of kings, and gave her the realm of Egypt, now extended to its former limits by the annexation of Cyprus and Cœle Syria; ‡ he declared Cæsarion joint ruler with his mother, with the title of king of kings and legitimate son of Julius Cæsar; § he proclaimed Ptolemy king of Phœnicia, Syria and Cilicia; to Alexander he gave Armenia,

\* Dion, xlix. 40; Plutarch, *Ant.* 50. Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, ii. Paris, 1904, p. 274: "To celebrate a triumph at Alexandria was equivalent to proclaiming the inferiority of the paramount city, and to remove that incommunicable supremacy which made Rome unrivalled."

† Concerning the age of these children, see Gardthausen, *Augustus und seine Zeit*, ii. p. 170, n. 25.

‡ Dion, xlix. 41; Plutarch, *Ant.* 54. See the coins in Cohen, i. p. 37.

§ It seems that M. Bouché Leclercq (*Histoire des Lagides*, ii. p. 278, n. 5) is right in preferring the version of Dion Cassius, who reserves the title of king of kings for Cleopatra and Cæsarion, to the story of Plutarch, who gives it to Alexander and Ptolemy. As Cæsarion was appointed Cleopatra's colleague in the government of Egypt—that is, of the chief State of the empire—it is likely that he bore the same title as his mother. Moreover, it is not impossible that Antony and Cleopatra, by their elevation of Cæsarion, may thus have thought to use for their own purposes the prestige of Cæsar's name among the Roman soldiers. It is a continuation of the policy which attempted to use the power of Rome in the service of the Ptolemies.



34 B.C. Media, which he was to inherit as the future son-in-law of the Median king, and Persia, which was yet to be conquered ; \* to the girl Cleopatra he gave Libya, including the Cyrenaica, probably as far as the Greater Syrtis.† If the conquest of Persia should make Antony master of the empire, he might destroy this empire as easily as he had created it ; if his second expedition failed, he could take refuge in this great empire instead of returning to Italy and could leave the triumvirate to collapse, while he played the part of Alexander's successor in Alexandria. Italy, exhausted and ruined, would have no strength to attack him. Such seems to have been Antony's plan.

Cleopatra's  
hour of  
triumph.

Thus for the moment Cleopatra might imagine that she had at least raised her kingdom from the humiliation to which two centuries of Roman domination had reduced it, that her efforts had organised, without demanding any sacrifice from Egypt, the great empire, "including all that had formerly belonged to the Lagidæ and to the first Seleucidæ, with some additional Roman territory, the unity of which was personified in the divine pair, Antony Dionysus or Osiris and Cleopatra Isis, two gods upon earth, surrounded by their divine progeny, Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene."‡ She had secured the great diplomatic and political triumph which had been the dream of many years and the object of long preparation, a triumph which was to crush once and for all the opposition and unpopularity to which her government and herself had been exposed in Egypt. However, her triumph was not complete. Antony had not consented to abandon all interference in Italian affairs ; he continued to maintain communications with Rome and to keep open at least one road for his possible entry to Italy as its master.§

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 54 ; Dion, xlix. 41.

† Dion, xlix. 41. When Plutarch, *Ant.* 54, says that the mother received Libya, he is certainly confusing her with the daughter, whom he does not mention.

‡ Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, Paris, 1904, ii. p. 279. Plutarch, *Ant.* 54, seems to allude to a revival of the worship of Cleopatra, who was adored as if she had been Isis, rather than to the beginning of this worship ; as a matter of fact, Cleopatra is represented with the attributes of Isis upon coins even anterior to this date. Cp. *Greek Coins in the British Museum*, p. 122, pl. 30, 5.

§ M. Bouché Leclercq seems to have somewhat overlooked the facts



Thus Antony continued to face both ways, like the god Janus; at Alexandria he declared himself king of Egypt, while to Rome he wrote and acted as proconsul. He had declined to divorce Octavia, fearing the bad impression which such action would produce upon the Italian public and upon his own immediate adherents; with his usual effrontery, however, he continued to use Octavia as a suitable instrument for his dealings with Italy; he sent friends to her who came to Rome to seek office or to beg favours; he induced her to intercede with her brother whenever he desired his good offices, and unscrupulously worked upon the kindness of this woman, who bore it all and yet continued to devote her chief attention to the education of Fulvia's children.\* Antony's children by Cleopatra were educated at Alexandria as Asiatic princes; their chosen tutor was a famous scholar, Nicolas of Damascus,† and though they were quite young they were surrounded with royal ceremonial.‡ Antony shared Cleopatra's royal power, delivered judgments in conjunction with her, accompanied her on her travels and accepted the post of gymnasiarch. He adopted the dress and manner of oriental pomp, and was worshipped as if he had been Osiris or the new Dionysus.§ He permitted the construction of a temple in his honour at Alexandria,|| and went so far as to provide Cleopatra with a bodyguard of legionaries.¶ However, in the donations made to Alexandria he had appropriated no title and no office, so that no one could say precisely what his position at Alexandria was. Moreover, although all these acts had been ratified beforehand, he wished the Senate to approve the donations to Alexandria by a special act, hoping to impress public opinion at Rome with the idea that the change was merely one of the reorganisations of the eastern states which

34 B.C.

Antony's  
equivocal  
policy.

when he says (*Histoire des Lagides*, ii. p. 275) that Antony's eastern policy "disregarded, with what can only be called blindness, the spirit of his age and the strength and direction of the public opinion which he so imprudently defied."

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 54.

† Gardthausen, *Augustus und seine Zeit*, i. 337.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 54.

§ Dion, l. 5; Velleius, ii. 82; Florus, iv. 11.

|| Suidas, i. p. 853 (Bernh): ἡμίεργον.

¶ Dion, l. 5; Servius, *ad Æn.* viii. 696.



34 B.C. constantly occurred, and was nothing more than a further application of the Roman policy which had frequently made and unmade empires of the Asiatic provinces. He therefore wrote an account of the Armenian war and of the reorganisation of the eastern provinces which he had carried out in the great ceremony at Alexandria; towards the end of the year he sent it to his faithful Ahenobarbus and Sossius, who were to read it to the Senate and secure its approval on the first convenient opportunity.\*

Italian opinion  
on the new  
empire.

Official information of events at Alexandria was anticipated by current rumour, and great was the consequent surprise and dissatisfaction.† Antony's strange oriental policy had long

\* Dion, xlix. 41 : . . . ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην, ἵνα καὶ παρ' ἐκείνων τὸ κῆρος λάβῃ, ὑπέστειλεν.

† A passage in Dion, xlix. 41, which confirms Plutarch, *Ant.* 55, shows us that Antony's official communication was not read; this fact proves that public feeling must have been highly unfavourable. In any case, the date of the senatorial session to discuss Antony's despatch is a difficult question. Dion, xliv. 41, affirms that ὅτε Δομίτιος καὶ ὁ Σόσσιος ὑπατεύοντες ἤδη τότε, καὶ ἐς τὰ μάλιστα αὐτῷ [i.e., to Antony] προσκείμενοι appeared in opposition, and hence it has been concluded that the discussion took place at the beginning of the year 32, when Domitius and Sossius were consuls. This opinion has been held by M. Bouché Leclercq, amongst others (*Histoire des Lagides*, ii. p. 286). In my opinion there are serious objections to this hypothesis. To begin with, Dion puts the despatch of the message, the insistence of Octavianus and the resistance of Sossius and Domitius among the events of the year 34. No doubt the Greek historian often places events out of their proper order; but it must be added that when he relates events at the outset of the year 32 (l. 2) he makes no allusions to this discussion. Moreover, events during the first weeks of the year 32 did not seem to leave room for any such discussion, and as the donations to Alexandria were made in the autumn of 34 it is difficult to understand why Antony should have waited more than a year before announcing them to the Senate. Finally, throughout the year 33 relations between Octavianus and Antony were strained, on account of these same donations, and this fact inclines us to believe that official information had been communicated. If Dion had not told us that Sossius and Domitius were then consuls, the discussion might be placed at the outset of the year 33, as it provides an admirable explanation for the events of that year. As Dion seems to have committed at least one inaccuracy, it is better to assume that he was mistaken in the consuls for the year. Dion and Sossius were probably the senators to whom Antony addressed his despatch, and as they were consuls in the following year Dion has confused their action as consuls in 34 and as senators and Antony's friends in 33. It must also be observed that Dion's phrase is strange and unusual: ὑπατεύοντες ἤδη τότε, "being already consuls at that time." Why should he



excited exasperation in Italy, but hitherto no one had ventured upon any expression of displeasure. The public felt much deeper respect for Antony than for Octavianus, and had long resigned themselves to acquiesce in all his actions. But for some time past financial difficulties and the burden of taxation had begun to press unduly upon the State and upon individuals; it was thought, with some amount of truth, that these difficulties were due to the interruption of taxation from the eastern provinces, and the national pride became more than ever susceptible at this moment, when a revival of ancient traditions was in progress. If Antony had conquered Persia he might have been able to silence these outcries, but this great enterprise had ended in failure; the gradual disintegration of the triumvirate emboldened Italy to manifest her impatience with Antony and every one else. Thus the first news of the donations to Alexandria met with a very hostile reception; they caused even greater anxiety in the circle of Antony's friends. Of all Antony's acts at Alexandria, one must have been particularly offensive to Octavianus—the recognition of Cæsarion as Cæsar's legitimate son. This announcement, together with the desertion of Octavia and her children, showed that Antony not only attached no value whatever to the friendship of Octavianus, but was ready to declare him a usurper who had seized the name and property of the dictator. Even when Octavia was the cherished wife and favourite adviser of the triumvir quarrels between Octavianus and Antony had been frequent and bitter; the prospects of peace were therefore extremely gloomy, if Antony were to fall under the influence of the queen, whose favourite project was to disqualify Octavianus as Cæsar's heir and replace him with Cæsarion. Moreover, Antony had just resolved to raise his legions to thirty in preparation for the Persian war, and many of his agents say that they were *already* consuls? Does he allude to the year 32? In 32 Domitius and Sossius were consuls-elect. The word “already” is inapplicable. We know that at this time the consuls were appointed by the triumvirs several years in advance. Possibly Dion meant to say that when Sossius and Domitius raised this opposition they were then great friends of Antony and already consuls-elect; this explanation would harmonise perfectly with the events of the year 33.



34 B.C.

were then busy recruiting soldiers in Italy and Asia. With thirty legions, the Asiatic contingents, his own and the Egyptian fleet, the treasures of Armenia and of the Ptolemys, Antony could command a most formidable force, the power of which would be increased if he succeeded in the conquest of Persia. In the year 36 it seemed that this conquest would be rather disadvantageous than profitable to Octavianus personally, and it was obvious that at the present moment his interest lay in preventing the enterprise, for its successful completion would place him at his rival's mercy. There was but one means by which Octavianus could raise obstacles to Antony's design: the Senate, under his commands, might refuse to accept the reorganisation of the eastern provinces as arranged by Antony at Alexandria. This refusal would certainly cause Antony the utmost embarrassment in the east and check his projected invasion. But there was an equal risk that it might produce civil war or some other misfortune of no less magnitude.

The growing  
change of  
public opinion.

Towards the end of the year 34 Octavianus had returned to Rome, leaving Statilius Taurus in Dalmatia to conclude the war; \* he was anxious to inaugurate his second consulship in person on January 1, and perhaps his movements were influenced by these new difficulties. He evidently wished to discuss the situation with his most faithful advisers before deciding upon so important a point. Direct evidence of the arguments which led Octavianus and his friends to their final resolution amid these difficulties would be of the utmost interest; such evidence is wanting, and we are therefore reduced to conjectures based upon the position of Italy and of Octavianus at that moment. It was a time of strange confusion. The tremendous social upheaval of recent years had induced a reaction, and a new movement was beginning, which directed attention to the historical sources of the nation and the small beginnings of the great empire. At the end of 36 Octavianus had shown some tendency in this direction by his own political change of front, and had himself stimulated this movement in consequence. It had now become a thoroughly conservative movement, supported by the leisured and cultivated class, and was

\* Appian, *Ill.* 27; Dion, *xlix.* 38.



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gradually absorbing the old revolutionaries themselves. Many people began to discuss these ideas in public and to argue upon the sound morality necessary to cure existing evils. Literature was wholly inspired with this spirit; in the second book of the *Georgics* Virgil sang his majestic praises of the hard-working and thrifty peasantry, of their piety, austerity and modesty, which had never filled the republic with civil war "in order to drink from jewelled goblets or to dress in purple"; Horace himself abandoned the trifling themes of his earlier style to deal with these greater questions. He had eventually resolved to publish the different satires which had hitherto been known only to his friends, and as a kind of introduction to his collection he wrote the first of his great moral satires; frivolity and trifling were now thrown aside, and the poet dealt with a grievous disease of civilisation, which the noblest master minds, from Jesus Christ to Tolstoi and Herbert Spencer, have pitilessly denounced with tongue or pen, with mystic solemnity or pointed irony: the blind and unreasoning pursuit of wealth for its own sake, which deprives men of all enjoyment of it and enslaves them even more than poverty itself.\* The book at length appeared, with its superb introduction, the first of the *Satires*; nor did Horace repent that he had conquered his dislike of publication; about this time, and probably in consequence of the publication, Mæcenas presented him with a fine estate in the Sabine district, with eight slaves to cultivate it, and a wood of considerable extent.† Thus Horace became a member of the leisured middle class, with one of those modest estates the working of which Varro had studied, and upon the revenues of which very many of the middle class were anxious to live. He was now at his ease and independent, reassured by the changed behaviour of Octavianus and encouraged by the growth of conservatism; he therefore began the composition of the second book of the *Satires*; this was to be an achievement infinitely superior to the first, alike for its artistic form, its mastery of dialogue, its anecdotes, its descriptions and its irony, and also for the importance of the subjects with which it dealt.

Horace's first  
book of  
*Satires*.

\* Cp. Horace, *Sat.* I. i. 41 ff.

† Horace, *Sat.* II. vii. 118; *Ep.* I. xiv. 1: *Vilce silvarum*: ■ ■ ■



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Avoiding disputable political questions, with wit and humour, brilliant dialogue, lifelike descriptions of contemporary manners and seeming paradox, Horace depicted the moderation, simplicity and sincerity which Cicero had drawn from Roman tradition and Greek philosophy, which Didymus Areus, the Pythagorean sage, had taught Octavianus ; in this direction the swelling tide of conservative opinion was gradually moving, carrying with it all who wished to enjoy in peace what they had saved or seized in the course of the revolution. In that age of exhaustion there was no place for the vehement audacity of Lucilius. Horace was careful to speak of vice but not of the vicious ; if he mentioned names he alluded to nonentities. When he might have angered those in power he preferred to depict a small landholder of Venusia named Ofellus, who had been despoiled like himself in 41 and had been forced to become the *colonus* or farmer of his oppressor ; in the mouth of this personage he placed a witty invective against wealth. This obscure victim of civil war condemns the empty and unproductive expenditure upon luxury which enslaves so many people in every civilised society to the pursuit of wealth ; he eulogises simplicity and moderation of life as the best means of preserving health and avoiding the gastric disorders of which Horace was in dread, and which spoilt the joy of life for many a man living in an over-refined civilisation. Finally he poured deserved scorn upon the rich who spent nothing for their country. The poet brings before us a seller of antiquities, by name Damasippus ; he had gone bankrupt, and is about to throw himself into the Tiber, when he is prevented by Stertinius, one of those strange street philosophers who then haunted Rome. Damasippus explains the doctrine of this ragged philosopher, which is nothing more than a wild exaggeration of stoicism. All men are mad ; greed, avarice, prodigality, ambition and love are but different forms of madness ; Horace himself is mad. " In any case, not so mad as you," says the poet by way of conclusion, but his Damasippus has uttered many a blunt truth before that point is reached. Then comes Catus, with the solemnity befitting a subject of vast importance, to utter a long dissertation upon the art of preparing and serving various dishes ;



thus he ridicules the vulgar gluttony which had become fashionable among the rich upstarts of the city during the upheavals of the revolution. Among other points the master informs us that sumptuous repasts are unnecessary, but that the plates must be clean and the rooms well swept. Another satire attacks the greed for money, "without which high birth, politeness, honour, are not worth a straw"; this subject is dealt with in one of its most loathsome forms, the hunt for legacies. The little villa given by Mæcenas finally inspires the poet with wise views upon the peacefulness of country life; he detests the pestilential atmosphere of towns, and remembers the fable of the town and country rat. Retiring, contented with little, of delicate health and without ambition, it was only natural that he should adopt this view of life.

The second book of the Satires of Horace shows how far the political and moral ideas of Cicero and Varro had found favour with the public; there was a great change in public feeling, which slowly increased as the power of the triumvirs grew weak; now that the fiercest appetites had been appeased, revolutionary ardour was growing cold. The bands of pillagers who had swept down upon Italy from every quarter in the year 44, nobles, knights and citizens, had completed their ravages and disappeared; those who had not perished were satiated; Cæsar's veterans were now settled in Italy as comfortable landholders; there was a class of upstarts enriched by revolution who had nothing to fear from a conservative revival of the old social forces, and were therefore themselves inclined to conservatism; they felt that permanent peace was to their interest; they lost enthusiasm for the triumvirate and were ready to join the prevailing movement, which strove to revive the manners and customs of the past. In a word, the triumphant revolution had spent its strength; the hatred, rancour and wrongs of the fearful crisis were slowly fading from memory, to the great satisfaction of Octavianus, who had long been anxious to stimulate the movement, for the reason that his past stood in greatest need of oblivion. After the reform of the year 35 he was no longer detested as before; at the same time recollections of

The second  
book of  
Horace's  
Satires.



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the past were still keen, and he could not afford to despise the animosity and mistrust which surrounded him. Virgil, for instance, who had known him for some time, spoke of him with high eulogy in different parts of the *Georgics*; Horace, however, showed no great enthusiasm for the conqueror of Philippi, notwithstanding his friendship with Mæcenæ, though Octavianus may perhaps have encouraged him to continue the moral teaching of the *Satires*. The donations of Alexandria and the well-founded distrust which Antony's oriental policy aroused in Octavianus and his friends, induced him to give full countenance and encouragement to this traditional and nationalist movement, to use it as a defence against Antony's intrigues, and to appear as the champion of Rome and her traditions by opposing any approval of the donations of Alexandria.

Octavianus  
opposes  
Antony's  
eastern policy.

We may regard this as a highly audacious resolution, knowing as we do the consequences of it, but it is likely that Octavianus and his friends hoped in this way to acquire popularity at no great trouble or risk to themselves. Italy and the Roman world were utterly exhausted; Antony would not lightly provoke a war which would at least force him to abandon all thoughts of Persian conquest; he would prefer to renounce this great design, which in itself was dangerous, and to remain on good terms with his colleague. In any case, public opinion was so utterly opposed to the Alexandrian donations that if Octavianus desired to efface the recollection of his past, he could not afford to neglect this opportunity of crowning his many misdeeds by one fine action. The result of the session of January 1 was in accordance with this view. Domitius and Sossius had divined the intentions of Octavianus, and had so accurately gauged the state of public opinion that they resolved not to communicate Antony's despatches or demands to the Senate. They thus deprived Octavianus of the opportunity to appear as a nationalist champion and gained a breathing-space in which Antony might repair his error. Octavianus, however, had no intention of abandoning his carefully matured policy, and requested Antony's agents to read the triumvir's letters in the session of January 1, 33. They naturally refused. Octavianus insisted, and they then consented to read the



despatch dealing with the Armenian war.\* The end of the year was approaching. As Octavianus could not secure the communication of Antony's despatches or of his demand, he took the shortest course to his goal; on January 1, 33, when he presided over the Senate as the new consul, he delivered a speech, *de summa republica*, in which he told the story of the Alexandrian donations and subjected them to severe criticism.†

Thus, to gain some little popularity, Octavianus declared his opposition to Antony's oriental policy. No one could foresee the terrible consequences. Octavianus had merely wished to sound public opinion. After this session every one returned to his usual business as though the matter were but an ordinary political incident. Shortly afterwards Octavianus resigned the consulship in favour of a friend and returned to Dalmatia; ‡ Agrippa, who was to be ædile that year, devoted his sole attention to providing work for the Roman artisans, who had been neglected by the government since the deaths of Clodius and Cæsar. He hired at his own cost a large number of workmen to repair the public roads, to restore the most dilapidated of the public buildings and to cleanse the sewers and repair the aqueduct of Aqua Marcia, which had become useless; § he undertook at his own expense the continuation of the *Sæpta Julia*, which Cæsar had begun during the Gallic war.|| He distributed oil and salt to the poor; ¶ he also designed and began the execution of a larger project. The lower classes at Rome had contracted a taste for baths—not the cold baths that were formerly taken in the Tiber for health and cleanliness, but baths as a matter of pleasure, hot or warm, followed by a lavish use of oil. As private bath-rooms were rare, speculators had opened establishments of their own, which were often ill-kept and dirty, and served by slaves; they were within the reach of every purse, and in certain cases cost no more than

\* Dion, xlix. 41.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 55; cp. Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxiii. p. 37.

‡ Appian, *Ill.* 28.

§ Dion, xlix. 43.

|| Dion, liii. 23, says that Agrippa concluded the work and inaugurated it in the year 26 B.C. It thus seems reasonable to assume that he recommenced the work at this date.

¶ Dion, xlix. 43.

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one quadrans.\* Agrippa proposed that during his year of office the poor should have free entry to baths kept by private individuals; † he conceived the idea of building a magnificent *sudatorium*, or steam bath, known to the ancients as a *laconicum*, for the accommodation of a large number of the lower classes; this was to be built in the lowest part of the Campus Martius, in the marsh of Capræa, which he probably filled in, thus saving the expense of purchasing land.‡ To this establishment was to be added a great sanctuary, the *Pantheum*; this was not to be a temple for all the gods, as has been thought from a mistranslation of the title, which merely means “most divine,” § but probably a temple to Mars and Venus, the tutelary deities of the Julian family.|| Agrippa also strove to improve the public games, which had become very meagre; at the first games he gave he paid all the barbers to shave the poor for nothing.¶ Poverty at Rome was so great that even this little expense seemed burdensome to many, and the barbers, who were then as numerous at Rome as they now are at Naples or London, made but little money, so that Agrippa helped both the barbers and their customers.

Antony  
prepares for a  
second  
Parthian  
campaign.

In the spring of 33, while Octavianus was hastening to conclude peace with the populations of Dalmatia,\*\* Antony gave orders for a fresh concentration in Armenia of sixteen legions, or possibly more, for some had been left in the country during the former year; these forces were to be brought from various parts of the east. He then made an early start from Alexandria, intending to reach Armenia and conclude a final alliance with the Median king. He had no idea that the Alexandrine donations would cause any trouble in Italy, and his mind was entirely occupied with the details of the

\* Horace, *Sat.* I. iii. 137: *quadrante lavatum* : : *ibis*.

† Dion, xlix. 43.

‡ Cp. Lanciani in *Notizie degli Scavi*, 1881, p. 276 ff. It seems reasonable to suppose that all the works which Dion, liii. 27, says were inaugurated in the year 25 B.C. were begun at this time. This would allow sufficient time for their completion.

§ The adjective *pantheus* is often attributed to one god. Cp. C. I. L. iii. 1139; vi. 695.

|| Dion, liii. 27.

¶ *Ibid.* xlix. 43.

\*\* Appian, *Ill.* 28.



Persian campaign. He was therefore greatly surprised to hear of the speech which Octavianus had delivered at Rome, of which information reached him in the course of his journey, probably during March. But a short time previously his colleague had seemed most anxious to maintain friendly relations, and now he was refusing to ratify his actions at Alexandria at the risk of destroying his prestige as triumvir throughout the east. In moments of danger mistrust is the predominating sense; Antony sent agents to Rome without delay to make closer inquiries than his usual informants had done, and to give an answer to the Senate and to the speech of Octavianus in public meetings with a refutation of his accusations. Octavianus had captured Sicily and the provinces of Lepidus; he had shown favouritism to his veterans in the distribution of land; he had failed to make a loyal division with Antony of the soldiers enlisted in Italy; instead of accusing Antony, it would be better for him to display common honesty and to give his colleague his proper share.\* He also wrote a letter to Octavianus in which he replied to allusions concerning Cleopatra by an open declaration that Cleopatra was his wife, as if Octavia did not exist; the obscenity of the fragment which has come down to us makes translation impossible.† In any case, the curious may there observe the leading personages of the empire abusing one another in the tone of drunken bargees. The sense of common decency is absolutely unknown to the ancient world. Antony, however, did not consider that the difficulty would necessitate the abandonment of his Parthian expedition, and therefore continued his journey to Armenia.

On his return from Dalmatia, probably in June or July, Octavianus received Antony's letter at Rome; he also learnt that he had sent agents to spy upon him, to hatch intrigues and to reply to his accusations. Antony's answer was clever, and the element of justice in it was likely to appeal to the impartial public; if Italian feeling could not approve Antony's action at Alexandria, it was at any rate by no means so indignant

Friction  
between  
Antony and  
Octavianus.

\* Dion, l. 2; Plutarch, *Ant.* 55.

† Suetonius, *Aug.* 69: *Quid te mutavit.* : : : Regarding the date of this letter, see Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxiii. p. 36.



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as his adversaries could wish. The attempt of Octavianus to turn public opinion in his favour had not been entirely successful. The political world displayed greater reserve and circumspection than the public at large. The gossip of the forum or the family circle displayed admiration for the republic, worship of the glorious Latin traditions and a desire for a return to true Roman policy, but when it became a matter of translating this private theory into public practice no one could be found to defy Antony's rule. His power seemed invincible; not only was he the head of a State and of a formidable army, but he also possessed an enormous treasury, with which he could help the embarrassments of any senator at any moment. Hence, if the majority showed no open approval of Antony, they showed no encouragement for the opposition of Octavianus. Meanwhile Octavianus had quarrelled with Antony, and now found political feeling uncertain and public opinion cowardly. The triumvirate's term of office was approaching its close, and existing difficulties were augmented in consequence. To renew the triumvirate upon the principles of the year 37 was utterly impossible; it was hopelessly discredited, and there was no further justification for its existence; the veterans themselves, the magistrates and senators of recent appointment, the purchasers of confiscated property, in short, all who owed their fortune to the triumvirate, now felt secure, and were therefore ready to oppose the further duration of this disordered and illegal government. Moreover, every one regarded the division of the empire as absurd and intolerable. How then could Antony and Octavianus continue so discredited an institution in the face of public opinion, even if they could force the comitia to renew the law?

Octavianus  
takes the  
offensive.

On the other hand, though Octavianus had been taught by experience, he had no intention of merely restoring the old republican institutions and then retiring to private life, nor would his chief friends have allowed any action of the kind. Sulla's terrible prestige had secured his tranquillity, but Octavianus could not follow his example without compromising the very considerable interests of which he and his political clique were the centre. The situation had become most



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complicated and obscure, and the only issue lay in some agreement with Antony, whose irritation had now provoked him to advance ridiculous claims. He must be forced to change his policy, and the only means to this end was to retort to his accusations by further accusations and to his demands by further demands. For this reason Octavianus, under the eternal law of conflict, was forced to seize the advantage of attack, and first directed his invectives and accusations, not upon Antony, who was too powerful and respected, but upon Cleopatra, who was hateful to the Romans for a variety of reasons. Octavianus and his friends replied to Antony's recriminations in speeches before the Senate and before public meetings. He accused Antony of living with Cleopatra, stigmatised his children by her as bastards, reproached him with making presents to the queen at the expense of Rome and with recognising Cæsarion as Cæsar's son; he advised him to give his veterans the land he had conquered in Armenia and Persia, and declared himself ready to share the provinces of Lepidus with Antony, when he had received his portion of Armenia and Egypt. No provocation could be more violent, and by such language Octavianus seemed to declare that Egypt should now be considered as a Roman province.

Thus the situation was becoming strained and anxiety at Rome increased; trivial and pettifogging quarrels had but too frequently ended in murderous civil war in earlier years. Much greater, however, must have been the anxiety of the Alexandrian court. Cleopatra could observe the formation of a party at Rome, under the leadership of Octavianus, opposed to any revival of Egyptian domination, and there seemed every probability that sooner or later an appeal would be made to force of arms.\* Possibly Cleopatra was able to communicate her fears to Antony by messengers, and thus to work upon his mind even at so far a distance. Possibly Antony during his march to Armenia told himself that this opposition, like the former negotiations at Tarentum, was intended to

Antony's plans  
for dealing  
with Octa-  
vianus.

\* Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, ii. p. 285: "She [Cleopatra] felt that the inevitable day was approaching when she, whose witchery was responsible, would be called to account by Rome for her attempted enterprises against the honour of the great republic and the integrity of its empire."



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hamper his Persian expedition ; that before beginning the war he would be well advised to settle Italian affairs once and for all and to crush this opposition to his eastern policy. Either conjecture is reasonable ; and in any case during the summer of 33, while he led part of his army to the Araxes to meet the king of Media, Antony suddenly changed his plans and resolved to spend the following year in the overthrow of his rival and not in the conquest of Persia. For the moment he would content himself with offering the king of Media a contingent of Roman soldiers to help him against the king of Persia ; he resolved to ask for a cavalry force in exchange. He proposed to send a large army and a numerous fleet to concentrate at Ephesus, in Asia Minor, and when the powers of the triumvirs reached their termination he intended to repeat the manœuvre which had been successfully employed by Cæsar in the year 50 ; he would undertake before the Senate to resign his command on condition that Octavianus would do the same. One of two alternatives would then necessarily follow ; should Octavianus consent, some time would be spent in communicating his decision to Antony, and this he could use, together with the pretext of the Persian war, to secure the prolongation of his command ; if Octavianus refused, he could begin the war, posing as the defender of the liberties which his colleague had outraged, and as prepared to overthrow the tyranny of Octavianus.\* The concentration of the great army at Ephesus

\* Dion, xlix. 41. Our information upon this decisive struggle, which was to conclude the epoch of great civil wars, is extremely scanty ; hence we are constantly reduced to conjecture in order to throw any light upon the behaviour of the different characters. In any case it seems to me impossible to explain Antony's policy unless it be admitted that he proposed to use the expiration of the triumvirate to rid himself of his colleague, as Octavianus had rid himself of Lepidus ; he would then be sole master. The proposal, which he several times repeated, to resign the triumvirate concurrently with Octavianus was obviously designed to deprive Octavianus of the opportunity of securing a prolongation of his power. He could never venture to propose the prolongation of so unpopular an institution when Antony himself declared his readiness to terminate it. It is improbable that Antony wished to return to private life, and therefore he must have been preparing some stroke to secure at least the proconsulship in the east and the command of the army, after resigning the triumvirate concurrently with Octavianus. In that case he would have



lent weight to the arguments of diplomacy. He was more fortunate than Cæsar, in that he could rely for the help of his intrigue upon the two consuls for the year 33, Domitius Ahenobarbus and Sossius. He persuaded them that he intended to abolish the triumvirate and re-establish the republic; thus he induced them to propose, when they should enter upon office at the beginning of the year 32, the immediate nomination of Octavianus' military successors, supposing, as was likely, that Octavianus left Rome and retained his military powers as proconsul. At the same time he requested Cleopatra to prepare munitions of war and to provide money.

Antony therefore met the king of Media with a fresh set of proposals, which the king accepted; he argued, however, the conditions of the treaty with much cleverness, and thus secured part of Armenia for himself.\* Preoccupied with Italian affairs, Antony gave way, and also ceded Armenia Minor to Polemo, in order to secure his full support.† He then wrote to Cleopatra in August or September, requesting her presence at Ephesus, and started himself for that town, upon which part of his army was already marching; it was a distance of 1500 miles.‡ Meanwhile Octavianus was busy in Italy with efforts to secure public favour, and flattered the nationalist and traditional movement by every means. At this moment, when admiration of antiquity had taken so firm a hold of Rome, one of the oldest temples of the town happened to collapse, as though to demonstrate the signal neglect of the monuments which recalled the insignificant beginnings of the great empire; this was the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, which was said to have been built by Romulus, and was full of ancient trophies taken

Antony postpones the Parthian campaign.

retained his eastern command and could have continued his complicated policy, whereas Octavianus could never have regained his power by legal means. Antony must have assured himself that Octavianus would not venture upon illegal measures, as upon this supposition the whole of his plan was based. The attempt failed, and therefore we cannot say how Antony proposed to secure a prolongation of his power after resigning his triumvirate. There seems to be some vague allusion to all this in the following passage of Dion: οὐχ ὅτι τι πράξειν αὐτῶν ἔμελλεν ἀλλ' ὅπως ταῖς παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐλπίσι τὸν Καίσαρα ἦτοι ἀναγκάσωσιν, ἄτε καὶ παρόντα, τῶν ὀπλῶν προαποστήναι, ἢ καὶ ἀπειθήσαντα μισήσωσι

\* Dion, xlix. 44.

† Ibid. xlix. 33 and 44.

‡ Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxiii. p. 52.



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in early wars. Archæologists and patriots were in despair; Atticus, an enthusiastic antiquarian, wrote to Octavianus urging him to rebuild the temple, and Octavianus immediately complied with this request; he was delighted to have an opportunity of showing his warm admiration for the great monuments of the past.\* Agrippa was busy with the needs of his own generation, and continued to lavish money upon the amusements of the people. He had combined with the races of the *Ludi Romani* in September a kind of lottery; tesserae were thrown to the people on which was written the name of some object which the man who captured the tessera could claim.† He also placed tables in the midst of the amphitheatre loaded with gifts, for which the people were to scramble after the show. The furious struggles which resulted, the desperate rushes, the blows and kicks, may be well imagined. However, the safest and most rapid means of dominating the masses has invariably been to corrupt them.

Intrigues  
against  
Cleopatra.

The work of inflaming public feeling against Cleopatra was also continued. It was said that she proposed to conquer Italy and reign over Rome; the strangest anecdotes of her life, her manners and her extravagance were invented and disseminated; an instance in point is the famous story of the pearl worth ten million sesterces which the queen swallowed. Every effort was made to represent the coming struggle as a necessary opposition to the dangerous designs of Cleopatra, though in reality she entertained none of the ambitious projects with which she was credited by her enemies at Rome. If Cleopatra had no wish to reign in the Capitol, she was well informed of events in Italy; she kept an eye on the movements of Octavianus, and when she observed that his party was exciting public opinion against herself and her kingdom in order to preserve their own power she applied her habitual energy to the defence of the Egyptian power, which she had just restored. Throughout her kingdom she gathered corn, clothes, metals

\* Cornelius Nepos, *Att.* 20; Livy, iv. 20.

† Dion, xlix. 43. The importance of the *Ludi Romani* suggests the conjecture that these festivities took place during these games.



and all necessary munitions of war; from the treasure of the Lagidæ she drew 20,000 talents—about four millions of our money; she gathered an Egyptian fleet of some two hundred ships and sailed with this force to Ephesus to meet Antony.\* She thus proposed to give Antony her most vigorous support and to follow him to the country which was to decide the fate of the new Egyptian empire; not only did she wish to secure Antony's triumph, but also to prevent any reconciliation between the triumvirs which would involve the sacrifice of her kingdom.

Thus Cleopatra left Egypt for this purpose about the end of 33;† Antony was approaching Ephesus, where he had concentrated his fleet and had ordered the eastern princes to send soldiers and ships during the winter; Octavianus, undecided as ever, was watching events at Rome and wondering what would happen when the triumvirate reached its end. Towards the end of the year Antony's letter came to hand declaring that he was ready to lay his power in the hands of the people and the Senate if Octavianus would do the same.‡ The meaning of this manoeuvre must have been plain to every experienced politician, but the simple-minded public were greatly impressed; they believed in Antony's sincerity and renewed their admiration of him, in the persuasion that the recent

Antony's plan  
of action.

\* Orosius, VI. xix. 4, tells us that it was Antony who invited Cleopatra to Ephesus. In Plutarch, *Ant.* 56, it is not clearly stated whether the queen went to Ephesus on her own initiative or at Antony's request.

† M. Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, ii. p. 286, represents Antony as going to Alexandria to fetch Cleopatra. "The chronology of the texts," he says, "is utterly confused, and events are post-dated or ante-dated, so that we cannot recover the details of Antony's route on his return from the second Armenian campaign. As it was a purely diplomatic purpose that he pursued, this campaign cannot have been long. Antony had left the command of the army to the legate P. Canidius Crassus, with orders to march to the Ægean Sea, and therefore had time enough to take the young Iotapa to Alexandria. If, as the majority of historians seem to think, Antony had gone directly to Ephesus, which he had appointed as the meeting-place for his land force and his fleet, he would have led the army thither in person; there was no reason for him to go in front of the army, as he would have to summon Cleopatra and wait for her." These arguments are weighty and valuable, though they do not seem to me wholly decisive; in any case, this detail is of no great importance.

‡ Dion, xlix. 41.



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accusations against him were mere calumnies invented by his enemies. The public had always felt more respect for Antony than for Octavianus; their confidence in him was greater, and they would have preferred him rather than Octavianus to undertake the task of restoring constitutional government, peace and order to Italy and confirming that unbroken tranquillity in which every one wished to live. Thus at the end of the year, in order to preserve his military command as interim proconsul, Octavianus was obliged to repeat the manoeuvre of 37; he left Rome on the evening of December 31.\* The triumvirate was now dead; no proposal for its renewal had been advanced; Octavianus and Antony had considered the wishes of the nation and the republic would be re-established. Great was the public delight. The following day, January 1, 32, the Senate met under the presidency of the consuls, who were once more the first magistrates of the republic; Caius Sossius immediately began the execution of the proposal which he had arranged with Antony. He referred to the declarations which Antony had made respecting his return to private life, and, according to Dion, concluded with a proposal aimed at Octavianus, which probably invited him to resign and to appoint new generals to take over the command of his army.†

Octavianus  
last coup  
d'état.

Our authorities do not say what the senators thought of this proposal, but it is probable that the majority of them were terrified by it. It may have been regarded as a return to the days of Cæsar and Pompey, when similar feints had been made before unsheathing the sword, and similar proposals for simultaneous retirement put forward. As if to complete the analogy, a tribune friendly to Octavianus,

\* Regarding this passage I entirely agree with the explanation given by Kromayer, *Die rechtliche Begründung des Principats*, Marburg, 1888, p. 13 ff.

† Dion, l. 2: *καὶ παραχρῆμα ἐπ' αὐτῷ* [Octavius] *τι ἐχρημάτισεν*. The terms of this mysterious proposal are wholly conjectural. But it is difficult to see what measure could have been directed against Octavianus at that moment except the proposal to appoint a successor to that command which he held for the moment by interim. Octavianus was no longer triumvir. M. Bouché Leclercq seems to be of the same opinion when he writes that "Caius Sossius proposed before the Senate that Cæsar should be invited to resign" (*Histoire des Lagides*, ii. p. 285).



suddenly interposed the veto, which had not been used for a decade.\* Obviously the republic had been restored if these obstruction tactics could be revived, just as the old party spirit had used them with such frequency to paralyse opposition action. Thus the first senatorial session which followed the conclusion of the triumvirate led to no result. Such a situation, however, could not continue. Too many interests were involved, and Octavianus speedily perceived that if he followed this path he would be lost in an inextricable web of intrigue from which no issue was possible. He feared that if he did not dismay his enemies by some display of energy they would grow bold enough to deprive him of his command, and would thus shake the fidelity of his soldiers, who feared Antony if they cared nothing for Domitius and Sossius; he therefore resolved upon a *coup d'état*. A few days later he re-entered Rome with a small band of soldiers; with these and a band of friends who held daggers concealed beneath their togas he entered the Senate and delivered a speech which was a moderate criticism of Antony's action and blamed Sossius for his measure. No one, not even Sossius, could venture to reply, and he then arranged a session, probably for the 15th, in which he undertook to prove his accusation of Antony by documentary evidence.†

Octavianus was obliged for the moment to abandon the moderation which had characterised his action for the last three years, but his *coup d'état* was attempted as quietly as possible. None the less, his action made a bad impression upon the suspicious public, which believed Antony to be sincere and regarded the *coup d'état* as a fresh act of tyranny and as intended to prolong the power of the triumvirs.‡ Octavianus' past had not been entirely forgotten, and people began to wonder whether, after a short period of moderation, he was not returning to methods of cruelty and violence. Thus everybody was overawed, even the two consuls, who did not expect this sudden

The result of  
the coup  
d'état.

\* Dion, l. 2.

† *Ibid.* l. 2. Cp. Kromayer, *Die rechtliche Begründung des Principats*, p. 14 ff.

‡ A proof of this statement is the resulting panic in the political world, as related by Dion, l. 2.

32 B.C.

blow ; Antony was too far away, they were but consuls without military power and were helpless against the commander of every soldier then in Italy. They did not care to reappear in the Senate with the prospect of keeping silence as during the previous session, and secretly left Rome in desperation before the 15th with the object of going to Antony.\* The flight of the consuls was regarded as indicating some near political convulsion, and increased the existing agitation. Many senators who were suspected by Octavianus or had reason to fear his animosity went away to join Antony ; Horace ventured upon political composition for the first time, and in vigorous iambic lines expressed the opinion of impartial men, regarding both parties as equally criminal :

*Quo, quo scelesti ruitis ? †*

The authority of the triumvirs must have grown very weak if a man of letters who owed his position to the kindness of Mæcenas could judge his patron's master with such impartiality. Octavianus was greatly disturbed by the bad reception of his *coup d'état* and by the flight of so many leading men ; he felt that unpopularity and distrust were reviving, and realised that severity had produced further exasperation in the country from which he would soon be obliged to demand additional men and money. Feeling too weak to use violence, he conceived the happy idea of announcing that all who wished to join Antony might go without let or hindrance. † This declaration allayed the prevailing anxiety to some extent. About four hundred senators went away, and seven or eight hundred remained.

\* Dion, l. 2.

† Horace, *Epod.* vii. 1. This poem was certainly composed at the beginning of the war of Actium, and not upon the war of Perugia. The third and fourth lines contain an obvious allusion to the war against Sextus. Moreover, it is psychologically improbable that in 41 Horace, who had lost his lands and was returning from Philippi, should have regarded as criminal the partisans of Lucius Antonius, who was fighting to restore his lands ; he would not have ventured to satirise in this manner the proud and powerful personages of that time. On the other hand, in the year 32, the situation was wholly different.

‡ Dion, l. 2.



Antony meanwhile had reached Ephesus; to this centre 32 B.C. came in by degrees, from east and west, from Illyria, from Syria, from Armenia and the Black Sea, ships loaded with corn, clothing, iron and wood; \* troops of every description led by kings, dynasts and tetrarchs of Asia and Africa; Bocchus, king of Mauritania, Tarcondimotus, dynast of Upper Cilicia, Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, Philadelphus, king of Paphlagonia, Mithridates, king of Commagene, Sadalas and Rhœmetalces, kings of Thrace, and Amyntas, king of Galatia.† Cleopatra arrived with the Egyptian fleet, with her treasure of two thousand talents and a long train of servants. The narrow streets of Ephesus were thronged with the soldiers of nineteen Roman legions, the powerful frames of Asiatic Gauls, Moorish warriors, soldiers of Cappadocia and Paphlagonia, and Egyptian sailors; every cross-road was a babel of tongues, and from every eastern town there thronged to Ephesus not only men-at-arms, but the servants of their pleasure, courtesans, dancers, lute-players, comedians, acrobats and actors, to amuse the soldiers and their sovereigns. Never had the ancient Asiatic town lodged so many famous figures in its majestic palaces and its public buildings. Ephesus witnessed a daily round of festivals, banquets, processions and shows, in which each king sought to rival the magnificence of the rest; of these Cleopatra, with her unrivalled splendour, was the central figure, dominating the kings of Asia as the true queen of luxury and inspiring every one by her example to prepare for war by dazzling festivity, as if she had wished to intoxicate this mixed multitude, the more easily to drive them to the final struggle, to ruin and destruction.‡ The Roman world was torn by anxiety; Italy shuddered at the thought of further bloodshed; yet in the midst of this painful anxiety, when the oldest, the most vigorous and the most civilised kingdom in the east was spending its last hour of life, Ephesus rang with festivity night and day. This confusion of armies, of language and of race

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 56.

† *Ibid.* 61.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 56, tells the story of these festivities, but is wrong in stating that they were held at Samos. His story shows us that Antony and Cleopatra did not reach Asia until the Asiatic consuls had arrived, as they were already at Ephesus.

Antony  
concentrates  
the army at  
Ephesus.



32 B.C. seemed to be celebrating by anticipation a great triumphal orgy, as though the coming battle had already ended in victory. The outcries of the land were drowned by the sound of lyres and flutes. Merciless as usual to the conquered, history has stigmatised these rejoicings upon the eve of the final struggle as shameful folly ; but the more attentive ear can distinguish across the centuries the agony of the death-throes in the distant echo of these festivities. The coming struggle was not, as historians have stated, a struggle for monarchical power at Rome, but was to consolidate or to destroy the new Egyptian empire ; it was not a war of Octavianus against Antony, but of Cleopatra against Rome ; it was the last desperate effort of the only dynasty which had survived among those founded by Alexander's generals ; finally, it was an attempt to recover a power which the fatal pressure of Roman expansion had ruined two centuries before. Intellectual culture, commercialism, pleasure, luxury and the reign of money had destroyed the political and military strength of Egypt ; every resource of diplomacy or corruption was exhausted, and the dynasty had been reduced to this wildly complicated defence devised by a woman. If she could not save the kingdom of the Lagidæ, she would at least drag it down with her to romantic and resounding ruin, to a catastrophe which would never pass from human memory. Egypt was not to perish like the realm of Pergamum, by a simple signature affixed to an obscure protocol. With every device at her command, both as queen and woman, Cleopatra had sought to draw advantage for her kingdom from the appalling political confusion amid which Rome seemed likely to founder. She had attempted to win from the great Italian town two of the most formidable brigands who seemed capable of wielding the destinies of the republic. She had succeeded in gathering to the service of her ambition thirty legions, eight hundred vessels and the most powerful sovereigns of the east, under the command of the boldest leader and the most famous man of his age. She was preparing an action yet more extraordinary and unexampled ; she proposed to accompany this army to war, to carry through the camps and the soldiery the sumptuous luxury of her palace, her women,



her slaves, her eunuchs, her tapestry, her jewellery and gold plate; she proposed to live amid these mail-clad soldiers, herself wrapped in the *turpe conopium*, the delicate veil which protected her fine skin from the touch of insects. It was no mere caprice, but supreme necessity, which obliged this extraordinary audacity. The eastern sovereigns followed Antony because they respected him or feared him, but not because they felt any desire to re-establish the power of Egypt. Antony seemed resolved to abide by his design of consolidating his rearrangement of the east, but he was obliged to pose as the defender of the republic lest he should lose the support of his Roman friends; these were inclined to help him, but would attempt to hold him back when they realised the true object of this war. The apparent unanimity of the vast army concealed many a germ of disagreement and of treachery. Would Antony pursue his design in the face of all these difficulties? Cleopatra had set a ridiculous object before herself in proposing to decide a great military struggle by extraordinary cunning; the strange feminine devices which she had hitherto employed had led her from one eccentricity to another; she had now come to consort with generals, to follow armies, to sit at military councils, to discuss plans of strategy, and this in order to provide that her one point of interest should be kept in view: the defence of the new Egyptian empire against Rome.

## CHAPTER V

### ACTIUM \*

The struggle between Domitius Ahenobarbus and Cleopatra—The difficulties of Octavianus in Italy—Antony divorces Octavia—Octavianus opens Antony's will—The *conjuratio*—The disorganisation of Antony's army—His strategy and that of Octavianus—Cleopatra attempts to interrupt the war—Feints of Agrippa—Octavianus disembarks in Epirus—The two armies on the Gulf of Ambracia—Neither will take the initiative—Antony proposes a naval engagement—Renewed discord between Cleopatra and the leading Roman adherents of Antony—Preparations for a naval battle—Octavianus calls a council of war—The battle of Actium—The capitulation of Antony's army.

The struggle between Cleopatra and the Roman party.

DURING the months of March and April the Roman senators reached Ephesus with stories of the *coup d'état* of Octavianus, and were disagreeably surprised to find Cleopatra in the city. Her assumption of queenly dignity, her persistent appearance at Antony's side as his equal, speedily accentuated the first unfavourable impression. They began to ask how the queen of Egypt, with her money and her advice, could be concerned in a war intended to establish the republic at Rome and to abolish the triumvirate; it seemed that the accusations circulated by Octavianus were less imaginary than had been supposed in Italy. No one, however, ventured to remonstrate openly with Antony. Fortunately, the numerous obscure politicians who had arrived from Italy included one genuine aristocrat of the old stock, Domitius Ahenobarbus; while deeply respecting Antony, he regarded himself as the triumvir's equal, and was alone in his refusal to comply with the

\* In the Appendix will be found the arguments on which I have based my reconstruction of this famous war.



ceremonial forms which Cleopatra wished to lay upon the Romans themselves; for instance, he would never address Cleopatra as queen, but always by her own name.\* Domitius had the courage to tell Antony what all were thinking, that he ought to send Cleopatra back to Egypt.†

Antony thus became the centre of a furious struggle of intrigue between Cleopatra and the Roman party at Ephesus. The moment was favourable to the latter. Octavianus seemed to have taken up the gage, and as the military concentration at Ephesus had proved fruitless, Antony was obliged, in view of the *coup d'état*, to renew his threats; threats, however, were of doubtful utility unless it could be demonstrated to Italy that Antony was making war, not merely to crush a rival, but to re-establish the republic. As things were, the presence of Cleopatra provided his opponents with excellent material for retorts, insinuations and slanders. Domitius, with the support of Dellius, Plancus, Titius, Silanus and all the leading members of the Roman party, had almost persuaded the triumvir to his opinion. At the last moment the queen tricked them all by a very cunning manœuvre; she gave a large sum of money to Publius Canidius, in whom Antony reposed great confidence, and induced him to plead her cause.‡ The delight of Domitius and his friends was, therefore, of short duration; when they were expecting to see Cleopatra start for Alexandria they learned that Antony had changed his mind and that the queen would stay. Antony had surrendered to the arguments of Domitius with great reluctance, and Canidius had been able to persuade him without difficulty that it would not be fair to send away the queen, who was supplying a very considerable part of the military expenditure.§ From this moment the smouldering animosity between Cleopatra and Antony's friends burst into open flame; the numbers of senators who had come from Rome and formed a kind of Senate about Antony were finally divided into an Egyptian party, anxious

32 B.C.

The Roman  
and Egyptian  
parties.

\* Velleius, ii. 84.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 56.‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 56. It is a conjecture on my part that the words *καὶ τῶν ἄλλων* refer to these four personages; as a matter of fact they all left Antony in disgust with Cleopatra.§ Plutarch, *Ant.* 56.

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for war, and a Roman party, desirous of maintaining peace. The leading men among Antony's friends at Ephesus had declared for him at the moment when relations became strained; their hostility to Octavianus, however, was by no means desperate. They were anxious to return to Italy for the quiet enjoyment of the wealth and comfort they had secured; they were horrified, like every one in Italy, by the idea of a fresh civil war after so long a series of similar struggles; they wished to see a reconciliation between the two rivals on the lines of the conventions of Brundisium and Tarentum, and they would readily have sacrificed Cleopatra and her ambitions to gain peace at any cost.

Cleopatra  
proposes the  
divorce of  
Octavia.

Cleopatra, on the other hand, did not propose to secure the peace of the Roman world at her own expense, and speedily realised that there was but one means of making reconciliation impossible; Antony had already resolved to reply to the *coup d'état* by renewing his threats and leading his army to Greece, and Cleopatra must now persuade him to divorce Octavia. This divorce speedily became a point of conflict between the Roman and Egyptian parties. The queen urged Antony to issue letters of divorce, and strove meanwhile to sow dissension among the Roman party and to buy the support of all who were not proud enough to refuse the large sums of money which she offered.\* Meanwhile the Roman party espoused the cause of Octavia and opposed the divorce which would have made an irreparable breach between the two brothers-in-law. Harassed by such contrary advice, Antony resolved to start for Samos with Cleopatra and the Roman senators towards the end of April;† thence he would sail for Greece, leaving part of his army in Asia for the moment; at Athens, where they would be nearer Italy, his final resolution would be taken. Thus hesitating between peace and war, between Octavia and Cleopatra, between Roman and Egyptian interests, Antony postponed the final decision which was to determine his fate.

\* A party of Roman senators were, in fact, supporters of the war at Athens. Dion, l. 3: βουλὴν τέ τινα ἐκ τῶν παρόντων ἡθροισε καὶ λεχθέντων ἐφ' ἑκάτερα πολλῶν. . . .

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 56.



The presence of Cleopatra in Antony's camp was undoubtedly a serious embarrassment; Antony had, however, many friends in Italy, and his legions, with the Asiatic contingents, made a formidable force. In spite of his difficulties his position was much more favourable than that of Octavianus, who was then surrounded by much graver anxieties. After the departure of Sossius and Domitius the republic had been left without consuls. Two had been appointed for this year, L. Cornelius and M. Valerius, but the former was not to enter office until June 1 or the latter until November 1.\* Many of the magistrates had also taken flight. Thus it would be impossible, or in any case very difficult, for Octavianus to secure from the Senate a legal authorisation to begin war upon Antony, assuming that the few senators who had not fled from Rome could still be called a Senate. It was even possible that an express declaration in favour of war would drive away the senators who remained. Consequently, if no change in the situation took place, Antony would have a legal right to lead his army, as his successor had not been appointed, whereas Octavianus had resigned his command by the mere fact of his entry to Rome. Under these conditions the soldiers were not likely to fight against the conquerors of Philippi, the less so as there was no money to overcome their legal scruples. Nor did it seem possible to extort this money from Italy. The arbitrary imposition of fresh taxes would counterbalance the bad impression created by Antony's mistakes and revive the dreadful recollections of the triumvirate. Antony had large funds at his disposal, and his agents were already travelling through Italy to bribe senators and soldiers and make unexpected conversions.† The difficulty thus seemed insurmountable, for it was impossible to respect legal forms and equally dangerous to begin another *coup d'état* in the face of repeated promises to re-establish the legal forms of the old constitution.

32 B.C.  
Octavianus'  
difficulties in  
Italy.

Fortunately, however, in contrast to the spirit prevailing in Antony's party, if Octavianus had neither the wealth nor the reputation of his rival he had many qualities of high value for maintaining discipline in face of the dreadful storm which

The supporters  
of Octavianus.

\* C. I. L. i. p. 471.

† Cp. Dion, l. 7 and 9.



32 B.C.

he was obliged to meet. His former impetuosity, susceptibility and suspicious temperament had been subdued; he showed greater patience, distributed praise and rewards with greater readiness, was more cordial with his friends, whom he treated as his equals, and was more ready to listen to the advice of others; thus he inspired great confidence, not merely in Agrippa and Mæcenas, who were bound to him by ties proof against all treachery, but also in supporters of later standing, such as Valerius Messala Corvinus, Lucius Arruntius and Statilius Taurus. These friends held many a long discussion during the early months of the year 32, to consider how some legal justification could be provided for the power of Octavianus; this was the most urgent necessity, and eventually they agreed to send agents into every town in Italy, who were to persuade the towns to take the oath to Octavianus upon terms which could be exacted in times of public danger by that magistrate whom the Senate had commissioned to watch over the safety of the republic. This oath subjected all citizens to military discipline, and therefore gave full power to the magistrates. In other terms, Octavianus and his friends apparently conceived the idea of declaring what we should call a general state of siege. It was a strange idea, and is the clearest evidence of the difficulties of their position; so extraordinary a constitutional subterfuge was without parallel, and was now used to base the new dictatorship upon a show of universal consent. To carry out this plan they were obliged to spend the months of February, March and April in preparing public opinion; messengers and letters went forth to every town in Italy, every interest was flattered and every passion was aroused, for the danger was most imminent.

Antony  
divorces  
Octavia.

Among Antony's adherents the prevailing tension had greatly increased. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Roman party, Antony had fallen yet more entirely under the influence of Cleopatra during the voyage from Samos to Athens, and had almost definitely resolved to divorce Octavia. One last scruple held him back; he realised that this decision would displease a large number of the Roman senators. He may have wished to mollify their opposition by flattering their pride or to shift



his own responsibility in the eyes of Italy to the shoulders of the Senate ; at any rate, when he reached Athens \* during the last fortnight of May he convened the Roman senators and laid the question of the divorce before them. The discussion was protracted. Many who wished for a reconciliation between Antony and Octavianus opposed this divorce, which must lead to war ; there were also senators who spoke in favour of it † under the influence of Cleopatra and her gold. At length Antony signed the letter of divorce, and sent messengers to Rome to serve Octavia with the order to leave his house ; ‡ at the same time he ordered the army waiting at Ephesus to embark for Greece. This action denoted a final rupture with Octavianus, an inevitable war, a crushing defeat for the Roman party and a brilliant triumph for Cleopatra, who immediately for her own purposes induced the citizens of Athens to confer those honours upon her which Octavia had formerly received.§ Antony's Roman followers, however, were most unfavourably impressed, and Antony attempted to allay their irritation by making a great speech to the soldiers, in which he promised to re-establish the republic two months after the final victory.|| Once again he persisted in his double-faced policy, posing before Italy as the defender of her liberty, while in reality he was drawing the sword for Cleopatra and her Egyptian policy. On this occasion the inconsistency was too obvious ; men began to realise the facts, and two important personages, Titius and Plancus, who had already been affronted by Cleopatra, left Antony after his decision and returned to Italy ; ¶ possibly

\* Dion, l. 3. Dion does not say that the meeting was held at Athens ; my conjecture is based upon the fact that after this meeting Antony resolved to divorce Octavia, and we know from Plutarch that his decision was made at Athens.

† Dion, l. 3 : λεχθέντων ἐφ' ἑκάτερα πολλῶν. . . .

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 57 ; Dion, l. 3. As regards the date of the divorce, and concerning the month Δαίσιος, part of which belongs to May and part to June, cp. Eusebius, ed. Schöne, ii. p. 140.

§ Plutarch, *Ant.* 57.

|| Dion, l. 7. Dion does not explain clearly when this speech was delivered. I assume that it was delivered at this time, because war then seemed certain, and Antony must have desired to reassure his friends and his soldiers with regard to his own intentions.

¶ Dion, l. 3 ; Plutarch, *Ant.* 58.

32 B.C.

they imagined that public opinion in Italy had turned against Antony. Though the divorce of Octavia had made a bad impression upon Italian feeling,\* the public as a whole were still undecided, and were certainly not inspired by that violent indignation which would have guaranteed the success of the proposed *conjuratio*. No one knew what to make of the two champions in this strange civil war, who claimed respectively to be fighting for the liberty and safety of the republic. Was Antony or Octavianus a liar, or were both alike false?

Preparations  
in Italy.

Titius and Plancus found Octavianus and his friends in the utmost anxiety. They had been panic-stricken by the news of Antony's orders to his army, and assumed that he wished to attack them without delay, before their own preparations were finished;† they hastily collected troops and provisions, equipped ships and employed every possible expedient to strengthen their defence; in the idea that the war might be begun in the north of Greece, in the modern Balkan peninsula, they seem to have conceived the plan of proposing a marriage between the king of the Getæ and Julia, the daughter of Octavianus; if Antony's statements are to be believed, they asked this king to arrange a marriage between one of his daughters and Octavianus.‡ Their actions, however, were constantly hampered by their want of legal authority, and they were obliged to exercise the utmost prudence. They therefore resumed their propaganda against Antony and Cleopatra in order to prepare public opinion for the *conjuratio* and to inflame every spark of Roman patriotism; numbers of anecdotes, true and false and often abominably obscene, were circulated concerning the Alexandrian court and the behaviour of Antony and Cleopatra, with the object of scandalising the less corrupted members of the middle class. It was said that the queen had reduced Antony to madness by a love-philtre; the story was repeated, with many variations, that the ambitious queen wished to overthrow the Capitol, make Rome the slave of Egypt and transfer the metropolis of the Roman world to Alexandria.§ Calvisius Sabinus even asserted in a great speech, with emphatic

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 57.

† Suetonius, *Aug.* 63.

‡ *Ibid.* 58.

§ Dion, l. 4.



exaggeration, that Antony had offered Cleopatra the library of the king of Pergamum and had allowed the Ephesians to address her as queen ; \* it was therefore obvious that Cleopatra coveted this wealthy Asiatic province, where Italian interests were very large : “ Rome was becoming the dowry and the appanage of a foreigner, the prize of a courtesan’s favours ; Egypt was to lord it in the Capitol, to insult the memory of their glorious ancestors and mock the cowardice of the present generation ; was this not enough to stir the pride of the dominant race and rouse the patriotism of the most apathetic ? ” †

Antony’s friends, however, were still numerous, and many people who were doubtful of the issue did not care to be embroiled with him in the possible event of his success. Octavianus was thus unable to prevent the growth of a movement opposed to his own which cast doubts upon the gravest facts and found excuse for every accusation.‡ The struggle raged furiously upon either side ; popular meetings were constantly held, and discussion waxed as violent as if the age of the great political conflicts had returned. Titius and Plancus told Octavianus that Antony had deposited a will with the vestal virgins, making further extravagant donations to his children and providing that his body should be sent to Cleopatra and buried at Alexandria.§ This was surely the best of proofs that Antony had been bewitched by the Egyptian sorceress, as he would not be divided from her even by death. In the hope of inflicting a blow upon Antony, Octavianus forced the chief vestal to surrender the will, and read it before the Senate.|| Public surprise and indignation were extreme, but Antony’s friends attempted to distract attention from the will by denouncing the dishonourable action of which Octavianus had been guilty. They accused him, with some reason, of violating a private and sacred confidence. At the same time it could not be denied that the will was unworthy of a great Roman, and by dint of public speeches they induced the people

32 B.C.

Octavianus  
opens Antony’s  
will.

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 58.

† Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, ii. p. 293.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 59 : Ἀλλὰ τούτων μὲν ἐδόκει τὰ πλείστα καταψεύδεσθαι Καλονῖσιος.

§ *Ibid.* 58 ; Dion, l. 3.

|| Plutarch, *Ant.* 58 ; Dion, l. 3 ; Suetonius, *Aug.* 17.



32 B.C. of Rome to send a certain Geminus to Antony as an ambassador, begging him not to ruin his cause by such foolish actions.\*

The conjuratio. There was, however, no further time for vain recrimination ; the divorce was an accomplished fact, and the enemy's forces were almost entirely transported to Greece. Octavianus saw that he must act, and probably towards the end of July he ordered his agents throughout Italy to force the towns to accept the *conjuratio*. How this strange operation was executed we do not know ; probably the chief municipal magistrate or some leading citizen assembled the inhabitants of every town, made a speech explaining that Italy was menaced by Cleopatra, who wished to enslave Rome, that the republic was bereft of its Senate through the absence of the senators, and Italy must therefore save herself by taking the oath of fidelity to Octavianus and submitting to military discipline. It is likely enough that Octavianus also promised, more or less explicitly, to re-establish the republic at the conclusion of the war. Italy was undecided and suspicious, and so unusual a demand was not likely to be answered by unanimous or enthusiastic action. Some towns, such as Bologna, refused to take the oath, and probably many citizens took flight from every town. The prudent Octavianus, however, made no attempt to force the oath upon recalcitrants ; he pretended not to notice refusals and asserted that the whole of Italy had sworn *in sua verba*, believing that those who had not taken the oath would be glad to remain quiet and would not venture to dispute its constitutional value as taken by others.† Thus, as some had taken the

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 58-59 ; Dion, l. 4. Plutarch, *Ant.* 58, says that the public were infuriated by this outrage of Octavianus ; Dion (l. 4) says, on the contrary, that they were angry with Antony. The two statements are not contradictory, but complete one another. People attacked Octavianus or Antony, as they supported one or the other, but upon the whole the impartial public were unfavourably impressed by the will, as is proved by the embassy of Geminus.

† Suetonius, *Aug.* 17 ; Mon. Anc. v. 3-4 : *Juravit in mea verba tota Italia sponte sua et me bello quo vici ad Actium ducem depoposcit*. This *conjuratio* is one of the most obscure passages in the history of the revolution. Our evidence for it is confined to the lines on the *Monumentum Ancyranum* and a few vague allusions in Suetonius and Dion. The *Monumentum Ancyranum* seems to prove that Italy took the military oath to Octavianus. No doubt this was an exceptional mode of procedure, both unprecedented and unconstitutional, as the oath



oath and as others had acquiesced, Octavianus could venture to act as though the whole of Italy had been placed under his *imperium*. 32 B.C.

The members of the Senate were consequently under his orders as soldiers, and he therefore induced them forthwith to declare war upon Cleopatra, but not upon Antony, who was merely deprived of his command and his dignities and was not declared a public enemy.\* Thus it is clear that Italy placed no great faith in the charges against Antony disseminated by Octavianus and his friends. Octavianus at once imposed fresh taxation; all freedmen possessed of more than 200,000 sesterces were obliged to make a contribution equivalent to one-eighth of their property, while all free landholders were to contribute a quarter of their annual income.† The public, excited by these imposts, refused to be intimidated by this military jurisdiction or the state of siege, and declined to pay the contributions ordered; in the month of August riots and bloodshed began, and Octavianus could not venture upon an energetic suppression of these disturbances in view of the uncertainties of the situation.‡ Fresh difficulties were of continual occurrence, and it is surprising, as the ancient historians point out, that Antony did not seize this favourable moment for attacking Italy itself,§ but after the triumph of the Egyptian party on the question of the divorce and after Antony's speedy advance to Greece, the excitement of the recent struggles had been succeeded by a kind of apathy which paralysed his army. Thanks to Cleopatra, the Egyptian party was supreme in the general's tent, but was unable to overcome

Fresh taxation  
and consequent  
difficulties.

was taken *sponste*, that is to say, directly by Italy to Octavianus, without any law or senatorial decree authorising Octavianus to receive it. I am inclined to think that this *conjuratio* was devised to give Octavianus a semblance of legal power for the war, which the Senate could not venture to confer upon him. If the Senate had consented to give Octavianus the responsibility of the war with Antony, he certainly would not have had recourse to this extraordinary means. It is also probable that the flight of so large a number of senators became a pretext for justifying this procedure; it was asserted that the people must act directly, as the Senate had ceased to exist.

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 60; Dion, l. 4.

† Dion, l. 10.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 58; Dion, l. 10.

§ Plutarch, *Ant.* 58.

32 B.C. the sullen resistance of the army, almost every officer of which was drawn by sentiment and inclination towards the Roman party. No efforts could obviate the results of Antony's dangerous political inconsistency; if the head of the force was Egyptian, the arms were Roman. The Roman party, the officers and the army, in reluctant despondency, were drawn against their will into a war for which they felt no enthusiasm, and the results of which they could not foresee. The majority of them did not venture to follow the example of Titius and Plancus, but continued a surly and refractory obedience; Antony himself was harassed and wearied, no longer able to rely upon Domitius or upon his wisest coadjutors. Canidius was unable to compensate for their defection; affairs were in great confusion; no one would trouble to execute the most necessary measures, to provide corn for the army or to arrange for its winter quarters; nor did any one know where the winter quarters were to be. Enterprise under such conditions was impossible.

Antony's plan  
of campaign.

Upon one point the Egyptian and Roman parties were agreed: Antony was well provided with money and could rely upon his army, as he possessed the admiration of his soldiers, while his adversary was too poor to buy their allegiance; he therefore had every reason to wait until Octavianus chose to attack him in Macedonia or Thessaly, following the example of Cæsar in 48 and the triumvirs in 42. The forced contributions and the state of siege in Italy would speedily raise disturbances and serious obstacles, and Antony could easily buy over Octavianus' army, as the soldiers were irregularly paid. In fact, immediately after the declaration of war upon Cleopatra, Octavianus and his friends had thought of trying their fortune in a battle; they had then remained inactive when they found that Italy was ready to revolt decisively against the equivocal dictatorship of Octavianus, while suspicions and fears of Antony's corruption were paramount.\* Antony, however, resolved to spend the winter with his army in Greece, to send additional agents to Italy for the purpose of distributing money, raising riots and shaking the fidelity of the legions.† He

\* Dion, l. 9.

† *Ibid.* l. 7 and 9.



intended to post the larger part of his fleet, more than three hundred ships, in the Gulf of Ambracia (Arta) between Corfu and Leucas, in a vast natural harbour communicating with the sea by a channel about three-quarters of a mile wide; scouts were to be stationed at Corfu.\* Thus the fleet, like an outpost, would survey the Adriatic, if the enemy attempted a crossing in the following spring. It was a wise decision, though executed in haste and in great disorder, as was bound to happen in a camp so full of hatred and discord; the Roman party, which desired peace, could not complain, as by these measures war was postponed. Any delay was welcome, as all hope of some peaceful arrangement was not excluded. The Egyptian party, however, used the dissensions and the apathy of the Roman party to secure the acceptance of the strategical plan which suited their special interests. A glance at the map of the Mediterranean will show that a general like Antony, who held the Cyrenaic, Egypt, Syria, Anatolia and the greater part of the Balkan peninsula, and was preparing for war in Thessaly, Macedonia or Epirus, should keep his resources or his munitions of war in Asia Minor. This country was the natural and the strongest strategic base, situated at no great distance, united to the Balkan peninsula by a line of islands like stepping-stones, and separated from Europe only by two arms of the sea. Antony had left a squadron with four legions at Cyrene under the command of Pinarius,† four legions in Egypt and three in Syria; ‡ these should now have been recalled to Anatolia. Not only did he leave these forces far away in Egypt, but proceeded to spread a chain of garrisons by land and sea across the Mediterranean, stretching from the Cyrenaic to Epirus. He stationed troops at Cyrene, at Cape Taenarum and at Methone; he proposed to spend the winter at Patras, distributing his land army throughout Greece; he fortified Leucas and stationed his fleet in the Gulf of Ambracia with outposts at Corfu. This strange arrangement can only be explained as

\* With reference to the disposition of Antony's army and for the texts where it is discussed see Kromayer, in *Hermes*, xxxiii. p. 60 ff.

† Dion, li. 5; Orosius VI. xix. 15; Plutarch, *Ant.* 69.

‡ This is a probable conjecture by Kromayer. Cp. *Hermes*, xxxiii. pp. 64-65.

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the result of Cleopatra's Egyptian policy, who thus wished to defend Egypt from the possible attacks of Octavianus and from revolutions at home and to maintain communications with the heart of her empire. It was a defective arrangement from a strategical point of view, as it provided an enterprising enemy with every opportunity for hurling an overwhelming force upon any point of the long line; yet no other arrangement was possible if the battle of Epirus was to be fought on behalf of Egypt.

Embarrass-  
ments of  
Octavianus.

The news of Antony's arrangements reached Rome about the end of October, and the possibility of surprising the fleet in the Gulf of Ambracia was discussed for a moment; according to ancient historians, a tempest caused the abandonment of this project,\* and a small fleet was sent to the coast of Epirus merely to discover a suitable spot for landing.† When navigation was closed by the winter of 32 and 31 Antony resigned himself to spend the winter months at Patras with Cleopatra, the Roman senators and the eastern princes; Octavianus, Agrippa and Mæcenæ concentrated their fleet and their legions at Tarentum and at Brundisium,‡ and then returned to Rome to watch over Italy and to perfect their final arrangements. For Octavianus and his friends the anxiety of that winter must have been unprecedented. Italy was agitated by discontent, the legions were clamouring for money and a wealthy enemy was inviting them to treachery; Octavianus required an immediate success to restore the fidelity of his troops, to pacify the country and to consolidate his power. But the age had passed when Cæsar, at the head of his little Gallic army, could boldly and skilfully practise the most important precept in the art of war, to pursue and defeat the main body of the enemy. Neither Octavianus nor Agrippa had the courage to land twenty legions in Epirus and to demonstrate the power of Cæsar's name in a new Pharsalia. The result of such a

\* Dion, l. 11; Plutarch, *Ant.* 62.

† For this purpose the ships of Octavianus, as we are told by Dion (50, 9), were off the Acroceraunian Mountains towards the end of the year 32, about the point where Octavianus was to disembark in the following year.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 62.



struggle would be uncertain : at the first defeat Italy would revolt, the army would desert to the enemy and nothing would be left to them but suicide. In any case it was most dangerous to lead soldiers against their comrades in arms ; nor was it certain that some fresh peace might not, after all, be concluded. Antony, indeed, seemed inexorable, and Cleopatra was with him, but any arrangement appeared preferable to the present situation.

Thus after long reflection Octavianus and his party resolved to adopt a middle course and to be content with a small success at the outset. The heavy turret-ships, which were too cumbersome, were left in harbour ; the numerous cruisers of Sextus Pompeius and the ships taken from the Liburni in the Illyrian war were to be concentrated ; with this force, the most mobile and seaworthy which they could raise, Agrippa would make a feint upon the southern coast of Greece in March and inspire the enemy with the idea that a disembarkation was intended at that point. Meanwhile Octavianus with the rest of the fleet would disembark fifteen legions on the coast of Epirus ; the fleet and army would then proceed to the Ambracian Gulf, to surprise and burn Antony's fleet. If this enterprise were successful, the destruction of Antony's fleet would make a great impression, which would be used to bring him to reason or to persuade Italy to the expense and burden of a longer war. The preparations for this expedition were apparently made with greater care than ever before. But Octavianus fully realised that he was risking all the wealth and power that had been won in thirteen years of civil war, and therefore ordered the 700 senators at Rome to follow him ; he would leave no one at Rome capable of heading a revolution in favour of Antony.\* Very few refused, but these included Asinius Pollio, who asserted that as the two combatants were his friends he wished to remain neutral ; Octavianus, anxious to avoid friction, did not insist in his case. In virtue of his full power, he even appointed the magistrates for the following year, and nominated himself as consul for the whole year with M. Valerius, Titus Titius and Cnæus Pompeius.

Octavianus' plan of campaign.

\* Dion, l. 11. Cp. Mon. Anc. v. 6-7.

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Cleopatra's  
attempt to  
stop the war.

Had not the fatal Egyptian policy profoundly disturbed Antony's strategy, it is improbable that Agrippa's name would now appear upon the pediment of the Pantheon or that Cæsar would now be an imperial title. During the winter, however, the crews of Antony's fleet had suffered severely; left with inadequate supplies while navigation was suspended, almost a third of their number had perished by famine or disease. Antony had ordered the ship captains to supply these losses by seizing peasants, travellers, carters or slaves wherever they could be found.\* During this winter a yet more disastrous event had occurred: the Roman and Egyptian parties had changed positions. Cleopatra, who was represented by Antony and his friends as anxious to destroy Rome, now strove to arrest the war in mid-course and to persuade Antony to return to Egypt in the spring without waiting for the enemy; the Roman party, on the other hand, threw its influence upon the side of war. After-events can only be explained in the light of this change, the reasons for which are wholly conjectural; they must be sought in the opposition of interests which then divided the two parties and dictated the movement of events. Surrounded by Roman senators, Cleopatra had been able during that winter to realise the true situation in Italy and the demands of public opinion; she had heard senators discussing their common hopes that after the victory Antony would restore peace and order to Italy, where there was much to be done; she realised that the senators believed in his promises to restore the republic, and saw that after the victory Antony would be captured by the Roman party and forced to return to Italy, as Cæsar had returned after the capture of Alexandria. In that case her Egyptian empire would be imperilled, and she would be obliged to visit Rome in the hope of reasserting her influence upon Antony, as she had gone sixteen years before to convince Cæsar. To Cleopatra, therefore, victory seemed as formidable as defeat. By the divorce of Octavia she had sown irreconcilable hatred between the former brothers-in-law, and therefore sought to stop the war, to carry Antony back to Egypt and to begin the foundation of a new dynasty, abandoning

\* Dion, l. 11; Orosius, VI. xix. 5; Plutarch, *Ant.* 62.



Italy and the barbaric provinces of Europe to Octavianus and his party, or to any one who would take them. If Octavianus wished to restore the unity of the Roman empire he would be obliged to attack her in the east, for which enterprise his strength and courage would never be adequate. In a word, Cleopatra wished to accomplish that separation between the eastern and western empires which Antony had merely indicated. With what artifices or sophisms she brought Antony to her opinion we cannot say. As he was by no means madly in love with the queen or bewitched by her, he probably pointed out the difficulty of turning back so vast a host from the path upon which they had entered; the troops and the allies would raise objections, the enemy would interpret this return as a flight, and it would be dangerous to declare thus plainly before the conflict that they were fighting, not for Rome, but for Egypt. It might be admitted that of the many senators who had left Rome to join Antony very few professed more than a nominal devotion to Roman supremacy; at the same time it should be remembered that their property, their families, and the objects of their existence were to be found in Italy. If Antony abandoned the war, they would be unable to return except by the permission of Octavianus; they would be ruined and forced to live as exiles in the east. If they suspected Antony's possible abandonment of them when they were half-way to Italy, they would surely revolt against him.

Towards the close of the winter these uncertainties and disputes were suddenly interrupted by the unexpected appearance of a hostile fleet in Greek waters. During the early days of March Agrippa had sent his mobile squadron against southern Greece, where he proceeded to hunt down the corn ships sailing from Asia and Egypt. He had captured Methone, and was examining the coast with his rapid vessels, as though to find a suitable spot for disembarking; \* his real object was to distract Antony's attention to himself. Antony was deceived, and believed that Octavianus intended to make Greece the theatre of war; abandoning discussion for the moment, he

The surprise  
attack of  
Agrippa and  
Octavianus.

\* Dion, l. 11: Agrippa's explorations of the Greek coast were certainly a feint.

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made all necessary arrangements for the concentration of his entire force.\* Cleopatra seems to have made an effort to calm his anxiety and to restrain him from any such precipitate action. But in the midst of his preparations news arrived that Octavianus had disembarked in Epirus and that his fleet and army were rapidly travelling southwards.† Antony then realised that Octavianus intended to destroy his fleet in the Ambracian Gulf; possibly exaggerating the danger, he hastened to Actium, after ordering every outpost and garrison to join him with the utmost rapidity. He seems to have reached Actium almost simultaneously with Octavianus, but practically unsupported.‡ The enemy's fleet cast anchor in the Gulf of Comaro, while the army was entrenched upon the north promontory of the gulf, upon a hill now known as Mikalitzí, and to this force Antony could only oppose the disorganised and weary crews of his ships, who were by no means inclined for battle. The surprise, thanks to Agrippa, had succeeded admirably. Antony's presence of mind, however, foiled this well-prepared strategem at the last moment. He dressed his crews as legionaries, stationed them upon deck, and appeared with his fleet before the enemy as if ready for battle. Octavianus, as usual, was afraid; imagining that the fleet was defended by the legions, he would not venture to attack by sea, and left his camp to offer battle on land.§ Antony deferred the engagement by skirmishes until his cohorts and legions arrived from different parts of Greece; he then established a great camp upon Cape Actium, which closes the south side of the gulf; he also fortified the entrance.|| Cleopatra, who had been unable to keep him back, soon arrived; she was unwilling to leave him for a day under the dominant influence of the Roman party.

The two  
armies on the  
Ambracian  
Gulf.

Meanwhile Octavianus had recalled Agrippa from the coast of southern Greece in order to concentrate his whole

\* Dion, l. 11.

† *Ibid.* l. 11-12; Plutarch, *Ant.* 62.

‡ Dion, l. 13, says οὐ πολλῶ ὕστερον. Plutarch, *Ant.* 62-63, gives no chronological indication. The difference in time must have been very small, otherwise Octavianus would have destroyed the fleet.

§ Plutarch, *Ant.* 63; Dion, l. 13.

|| Dion, l. 13.



force against the enemy. Thus towards the end of May (these events probably occupied the whole of April and part of May) the two rivals were facing one another after the manner of Pompey and Cæsar in 48 or of the triumvirs and the two leading conspirators in 42, in the Balkan peninsula, which has ever been the great battlefield for east and west, for Asia and Europe. The dreaded conflict, however, was long delayed; upon this occasion neither adversary seemed anxious to take the offensive. Octavianus fortified an almost impregnable camp, where he remained on the defensive, and secured his communication with the port of Comaro by high walls; he even attempted to open fresh negotiations for peace. He was in a better position than Cæsar in 48 or than the triumvirs in 42, as his fleet could bring corn for the soldiers from Italy and from the islands; there was no fear of hunger to decide his irresolution, and irresolute he therefore remained. Antony declined negotiations, but made no effort to force a battle; he merely transferred part of his army to the northern side of the strait, to menace the enemy's camp more closely, and sent large squadrons of cavalry round the bay to try and cut off the enemy's water-supply; possibly he attempted to seduce the legions of Octavianus by secret promises. The all-powerful Cleopatra would not allow him either to make war or to conclude peace. In either camp the leading members of each party were divided by dissension, mistrust and fear, which precluded the possibility of decisive action. Thus these vast armies had come from opposite points of the world to remain in mutual watchfulness; their apathy is a clear proof of the decadence which had overcome the triumvirate government and the order of things as established in 43 by the triumph of the popular revolution. Within a dozen years the inheritance of Clodius and Cæsar had been wasted and dispersed.

Octavianus, however, was well aware of the danger of complete inaction; the soldiers would grow despondent and inclined to desertion, while Italy would be the readier to revolt. As he would not venture force, he attempted cunning. He sent agents into Greece and Macedonia to raise riots and demonstrations against Antony among the populations

Disinclination  
to attack.

31 B.C. oppressed by the crushing taxation \* of his rival, whose extortions had caused great famines in certain regions.† The noblest family in the Peloponnese, that of Euricles, who was anxious to avenge the slaughter of his father by Antony, went so far as to fit out a vessel for Octavianus' fleet, which was commanded by Euricles in person. Titius and Statilius surprised and defeated a small body of the enemy's cavalry, and Octavianus sent exaggerated reports of this success to Italy, as if it had been a magnificent exploit.‡ Agrippa surprised a little squadron guarding Leucas, defeated it,§ sailed round the island and drove away a second squadron which was guarding Cape Ducato.|| Octavianus then wrote despatches to Rome stating that Antony's fleet was blockaded in the Ambracian Gulf; ¶ this was exaggerated bravado, as the fleet was still intact and able to issue against his own at any moment. Agrippa probably left no detachment at Leucas; in any case he was unable to prevent the arrival of Antony's corn ships; otherwise Antony would have made some effort to retake the island. In short, operations were confined to feints and demonstrations, by which Octavianus strove to conceal his weakness and his fear from his enemy and from the Italian public. No victory, however, was ever won by mere feints. Octavianus' vacillation would doubtless have tempted the enemy to attack, but fortunately for him Antony's strategy was disturbed by the innate defect of his policy, the inconsistency which was trying to consolidate the Egyptian empire and professed as its justification the restoration of Roman liberties; this contradiction led to incoherent action, which again precipitated a catastrophe, so strange and so unforeseen as to be inexplicable both to contemporaries and to posterity. Cleopatra redoubled her energy in persuading Antony to abandon any project of attack.

\* Dion, l. 13.

† Cp. Plutarch, *Ant.* 68, and the interesting inscription of Epidaurus : C. I. G. P. I. i. 932, v. 25-30.

‡ Dion, l. 13.

§ *Ibid.* ; Florus, IV. xi. 5. Orosius, VI. xix. 7, says *Corcyram cepit*, but he is confusing this island with Leucas; Corcyra was not captured by Agrippa, but was abandoned by Antony's army.

|| Florus, IV. ii. 5.

¶ There is also a remnant of this exaggeration in Florus, IV. xi. 5.



She was opposed to the war both for political and military reasons. As Octavianus persistently remained on the defensive in his camp, the best course was to retreat upon Macedonia, and thus oblige him to follow ; this movement implied retirement from the sea, by which rapid communication with Egypt was possible ; Cleopatra herself would be forced to bear the risk and fatigue of constant marching and counter-marching as in 48, before the two armies came to close quarters. Moreover, the issue of a battle is ever uncertain ; if Antony were defeated in so distant a country, Egypt would rise and Cleopatra's children would be endangered.

With the obstinacy, the certainty and the vehemence of an ambitious and intelligent woman, of a confident and self-willed queen, Cleopatra strove to persuade the triumvir, now broken by age and debauchery, to fall back upon Egypt by sea. Her methods of persuasion would be highly interesting, but those who knew the details of these decisive days could not or would not tell the story of them. The result alone is known, for Cleopatra was successful. At the beginning of July Antony seems to have contemplated the abandonment of the war and a return to Egypt. It was impossible, however, to proclaim his intention of leaving Italy to Octavianus, of deserting the republican cause and betraying the Roman senators, who had left Italy for his sake. Cleopatra's ingenuity therefore conceived another device ; a naval battle to mask the retreat was to be fought. Part of the army should be sent on board the fleet, other troops should be despatched to guard the most important points in Greece ; the fleet should sail out in order of battle and should attack if the enemy advanced ; then sail would be made for Egypt.\* In this way at least half the army, which would be on board the ships, would certainly reach Egypt ; if the eastern contingents and the remaining legions were afterwards scattered, the losses would not be serious. On the other hand, as the war against Sextus Pompeius had proved, a naval conflict between equal forces rarely ended in a final defeat, as panic and flight were less easy by sea than by land.

Cleopatra  
persuades  
Antony to  
retire to  
Egypt.

31 B.C.  
Antony's  
arrangements  
for a naval  
battle.

Thus at the beginning of July Antony seems to have proposed a naval battle to the generals and eastern commanders. So strange and unexpected a proposal produced universal astonishment. Domitius Ahenobarbus, Dellius, Amyntas and their friends began to inquire the reason of so strange an idea; Canidius began to point out that a naval victory would by no means break the enemy's power; the most speedy means of concluding the war was to march into Macedonia and to attack Octavianus when he followed.\* Every one forthwith assumed that this unexpected proposal had been suggested to Antony by Cleopatra; argument ran high, and if the truth was not discovered, something of Cleopatra's intentions was revealed by the very absurdity of the proposal; there was a suspicion that the queen desired a naval battle to conclude the war and to return to Egypt with Antony, abandoning any solution of the grave political difficulties which were to be settled by this war. The dissension between the Egyptian and Roman parties burst out once more; furious interviews took place between Cleopatra and the leading Romans; Domitius was the chief object of her attacks.† In the course of these discussions Cleopatra even seems to have threatened Antony, if it be true that at one time he suspected her of wishing to poison him, a dramatic conclusion to the famous love-story.‡ Discord went so far that even Canidius, who had persuaded Antony to bring Cleopatra with him, now advised him to send the queen back to Egypt by sea if she had not the courage to continue the war, and not to sacrifice the army and victory to her fears in so ridiculous a manner. Within a few days the group of leading men about Antony's person were overwhelmed by a storm of discord, hatred and calumny; Antony felt himself powerless to restore peace, was obliged to yield, and abandoned the project of a naval conflict; in order to appease the suspicions and distrust of the Romans, he sent Dellius and Amyntas to Thrace to recruit a cavalry force; § this again seemed to prove his intention to fight a decisive battle in Epirus. Discord, however, continued unchecked, and grew so vehement during

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 63.

† Pliny, XXI. i. 124

‡ Dion, l. 154

§ Dion, l. 13.



31 B.C.

July that Domitius Ahenobarbus, wearied by the insolence of Cleopatra, and mistrusting Antony, who would listen to no one but this woman, went on board a ship one morning under pretext of making a short excursion for his health, as he had fever; he betook himself to the camp of Octavianus. Shortly afterwards, and probably for similar reasons, the king of Paphlagonia followed his example.\* Infuriated by this treachery and exhausted by the interminable quarrels, Antony fell back upon severe measures; at the first suspicion of treason he executed the senator Q. Postumius and a petty Arab king named Jamblicus; however, he was speedily horrified by the result of these measures, and began to fear that Dellius and Amyntas would not return. He thought of following them for a moment, but contented himself with sending a message for their recall.†

Amid these disputes and uncertainties the days were passing; the month of August had come and neither army had secured any advantage. An unimportant naval skirmish and an insignificant cavalry action had been the only military events hitherto.‡ As Antony could not induce Cleopatra and the Roman party to agree, he would not decide either to strike the camp or to fight a naval battle. Octavianus had been told by Domitius and others of Antony's intentions to attack with the fleet; he concentrated all his ships in the port of Comaro, but he waited in vain for the proposed attack. However, at the beginning of August Cleopatra once more pressed Antony to follow her views, and added to her other arguments her fear of malaria. Antony's camp was stationed in an unhealthy spot and the hot weather was bringing disease; the queen was weary of the hardships of war, wished to leave this pestilential spot as soon as possible, and was, indeed, anxious to be done with the whole business.§ It is probable that Antony continued to resist. Previous discord had increased the danger of so bold and unexpected a manœuvre. Cleopatra continued to urge him, and seems once more to have bought the help of Canidius. Antony probably despaired of persuading

Antony is  
persuaded by  
Cleopatra.

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 63; Dion, l. 13.

† Dion, l. 13.

‡ *Ibid.* 14.

§ *Ibid.* 15.

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Cleopatra to join him upon an expedition to the heart of Greece or of persuading the Roman party to return to Egypt; he therefore decided upon the project he had abandoned two months previously. This time he asked the advice of no one, and issued orders for a naval battle on August 29.\*

Preparations  
for the battle  
of Actium.

These orders were both unusual and equivocal; not only were 22,000 soldiers, probably ten legions, to embark upon 170 ships of war, the crews of which were complete,† but the pilots, to their amazement, were told to take with them their large sails,‡ which formed a heavy encumbrance. Why were these sails to be taken for a battle but a few miles from the gulf? Antony asserted that they would be needed for the pursuit of the enemy, but this explanation was regarded as unsatisfactory. Yet greater was the surprise when he ordered that those ships which would not be wanted in the action should be burnt, and with them part of the Egyptian fleet.§ It was surely common prudence to keep these vessels in reserve to supply any losses in the battle. These arrangements were either absurd or useless, if Antony merely wished to offer battle by sea. Among the far-sighted suspicion revived that the naval battle was intended to cover a retreat upon Egypt and a desertion of the Roman party. When he became aware of these fresh suspicions Antony began an attack upon the enemy's camp with a few cohorts on August 30 as a guarantee of his intentions. The assault was naturally repelled; || nor was it easy for Antony to deceive by these tricks such far-sighted and suspicious men as Dellius and Amyntas, at a time when every movement in the Ambracian Gulf betrayed his real intentions. It was necessary to carry away the treasure and difficult to embark it upon the sixty Egyptian ships without revealing Cleopatra's secret plan to the whole army. The treasure was

\* The battle of Actium was fought on September 2. Cp. Dion, li. 1; C. I. L. i. pp. 324 and 401; Ephem. Epigr. i. 35 ff. Plutarch, *Ant.* 65, says that the battle was fought five days after the 22,000 soldiers had been ordered to embark. The order was consequently issued upon August 29.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 64; Orosius, VI. xix. 9.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 64.

§ *Ibid.*; Dion, l. 15.

|| Orosius, VI. xix. 8; *tertio post pugnam die.*



therefore conveyed on board at night by faithful slaves.\* Some days were required for this task, but the weather broke and a violent storm raged on the open sea.† It was possible to delay without exciting suspicion. But the embarkation of the treasure by night could not be entirely concealed, and the suspicions of the mistrustful were thereby confirmed. It was probably on August 31 that Dellius and Amyntas were definitely persuaded of Antony's intention to withdraw; foreseeing that this madness would end in dreadful catastrophe, they deserted to Octavianus, Dellius alone‡ and Amyntas with 2000 Galatian cavalry.

Frementes verterunt bis mille equos  
Galli canentes Cæsarem.§

The soldiers themselves felt no great enthusiasm for a naval battle, but they suspected nothing, and loyally obeyed Antony.||

\* Dion, l. 15 : νύκτωρ . . . λαθραίως.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 65.

‡ *Ibid.* 59. Plutarch places the desertion of Dellius much too early, if Dion's statement (l. 23) be correct that Dellius informed Octavianus of Antony's final resolution. Dion's statement seemed to me probable, for on September 2, before the battle, Octavianus was certainly aware of Antony's intentions, as upon the day following the battle he was able to tell the soldiers of his rival's flight. He must therefore have been informed by some leading member of Antony's suite, who was able to guess the secret and to desert immediately before the battle, when the plan had been finally adopted. Dellius was in this position, and we may therefore assume that Plutarch was mistaken, and correct his text by Dion. M. Bouché Leclercq (*Histoire des Lagides*, ii. p. 300, n. 3), however, observes: "The project of forcing the blockade and taking flight was no hasty decision on the eve of the battle, and Dellius was sufficiently intimate with those in command to have foreseen the adoption of this plan." This objection seems to me ill-founded. The proposal for retirement by sea to Egypt was undoubtedly long discussed between Cleopatra and Antony, but it was sedulously concealed, above all from the Roman party, for reasons which I have detailed at length in this chapter and in the Appendix. The Roman party was told that the object of the naval battle was to crush the enemy. Thus it is not strange that Dellius, who had long been doubtful of Antony's real intentions, should have resolved to desert at the last moment, as soon as he was convinced that Antony would abandon the struggle and the very considerable interests of the Roman party. Moreover, Dion, l. 23, says that the desertion of Dellius and some others decided Antony to carry out his plan; obviously, therefore, his desertion must have been one of the last.

§ Plutarch, *Ant.* 63; Horace, *Epod.* 9, 17.

Plutarch, *Ant.* 64.



31 B.C.  
Octavianus  
summons a  
council of  
war.

Dellius and Amyntas, however, gave Octavianus an account of the situation in Antony's camp; \* they explained what evidence had induced them to believe that Antony and Cleopatra were preparing for flight into Egypt and had no intention of fighting a serious battle. The surprise caused by this news may easily be imagined. Was this formidable enemy actually intending to abandon Italy and the republic? Was so improbable a retreat an actual possibility, or was some snare concealed? On receiving this extraordinary information Octavianus would not decide for himself, and probably convened a council of war on September 1. With characteristic timidity and caution, Cæsar's son proposed to leave Antony's passage unimpeded, in order to show the soldiers and allies that his flight was a reality; he would then return to Actium and invite the army, discouraged by the desertion of its general, to join his forces. In the last convulsions of this death-struggle the most tragical events became grotesque; two powerful armies had been brought face to face with vast commotion, two adversaries had approached with threats and fury, and were now ready to turn their backs and flee. Agrippa, who was the better general, did not feel sure that the soldiers would so easily transfer their allegiance; he advised that Antony's passage should be barred and that a battle should be fought. If Antony wished to go to Egypt he would offer no serious resistance; in any case, he would withdraw after the battle, and whatever the result, it would be easy to publish in Italy news of a great victory, which had forced Antony to flee to Egypt.† Moreover, some attempt must be made to capture the 22,000 legionaries embarked upon his fleet. Never had a battle offered greater advantages at less risk. Octavianus recognised the truth of these arguments and agreed to Agrippa's plan; on September 1 eight legions and five pretorian ‡ cohorts were ordered to embark. The sea grew calm in the evening and the preparations seemed to be concluded; everything

\* Dion, l. 23, says *παρά τε ἄλλων καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Δελλίου*. I assume that Amyntas was also among the "others," for reasons explained in the former note; in other words, he seems to have acted in conjunction with Dellius throughout this business.

† Dion, l. 31.

‡ Orosius, VI, xix. 8.



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pointed to an encounter on the following day. The next morning Agrippa sailed out over a calm sea, and stationed himself about three-quarters of a mile from the exit of the channel, dividing his fleet into three squadrons; the left wing was under his command, the centre under Lucius Arruntius, the right under M. Lurius and Octavianus. It was not until midday that Antony's heavy ships began to issue from the gulf; they also formed in line in three divisions: on the left C. Sossius opposed Lurius; in the centre Marcus Insteius and a certain Marcus Octavianus opposed Arruntius; on the right Antony and L. Gellius opposed Agrippa. Behind them, in the centre, were Cleopatra's sixty ships under her own command. The details of the arrangements between Antony and Cleopatra are unknown, but to judge from events the queen seems to have been exasperated by the interminable struggle and anxious to return to Egypt at any cost. Fearing that some accident might prevent Antony's departure, she persuaded that enfeebled general at the last moment to join her flight as soon as the north wind rose, which sets in every day about noon upon this sea. She was to give the signal by advancing with her little fleet, even if the battle were still in progress. Antony would leave his vessel for a quinquireme in waiting and would follow her; Canidius, who knew their plans and was commanded to lead the rest of the troops to Greece and thence to Asia, would order the remainder of the fleet to follow them. Thus Antony would be but a few hours in advance of the main body of his army. It seems that, to make more certain of him, Cleopatra had stationed Alexis of Laodicea upon the flagship with orders to overcome Antony's hesitation if he should show disinclination at the last moment.

In any case, after a short delay, Antony's left squadron advanced upon the enemy under a light breeze; Agrippa attempted to outflank it with his right wing; the whole of Antony's fleet advanced, and the two forces were speedily engaged in the open sea. Like the ships of Sextus at the battle of Milazzo, the cruisers of Octavianus easily sailed round the heavy ships of Antony, attempting to break their oars and rudders, and avoiding the hail of stones and arrows discharged

The battle of  
Actium.

31 B.C. by the machines or the hooks and harpoons with which the enemy attempted to catch or sink them. Arrows, firebrands and stones rushed through the air, while Cleopatra in trembling anxiety watched the progress of this insensate struggle, in which so many Romans were perishing to save her kingdom of Egypt. Antony's soldiers fought bravely with their usual devotion to their general. They might perhaps have won a victory, and in any case could have retired in the evening after inflicting as much damage as they had received, when suddenly Cleopatra, as the north breeze had sprung up, set sail and boldly passed amid the combatants on her voyage to the Peloponnese. Antony immediately went on board the quinquireme and followed her.\*

Antony's  
flight.

Great was the surprise among the combatants, but few of Antony's fleet noticed the general's flight and a desperate battle continued. The result was indecisive; at sunset Antony's ships re-entered the bay in succession, and therefore in some disorder. Octavianus did not realise the course of events, and, fearing some surprise and flight in the darkness, he spent the night at sea with his fleet and slept on board.† It was not until the next day that he invited Antony's fleet and army to surrender, telling them that their general had fled and that they had no further reasons for fighting.‡ Though the rumour of Antony's disappearance was already current, and though he was not to be found, his soldiers would not believe that he had abandoned them, but were persuaded that important business had called him away and that he would soon return. Thus the proposals of Octavianus were refused, but Canidius could not venture to proclaim Antony's final orders and command the fleet to force a passage and sail to Egypt. Though the Egyptian party commanded in Antony's tent, the Roman party was supreme in the army through the officers, and this discord between the leader and the troops produced immediate and disastrous effects. Canidius dared not explain that the general had actually fled to Egypt; he feared that the troops would mutiny in indignation, would decline to fight in despon-

\* Dion, l. 31-35; Plutarch, *Ant.* 65-68.

† Suetonius, *Aug.* 17.

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 68.



dency, or would refuse to believe him.\* Thus one day was spent; certain Roman senators and eastern princes saw the truth and took flight.† Three more days passed; the soldiers would not move and Canidius was at his wits' end, while Octavianus, persuaded that the army would not transfer its allegiance, thought of pursuing Antony.‡ Antony was already far away, and when he did not reappear or send news within six days the confidence of the soldiers began to waver and the desertions of the Roman leaders and eastern princes with their contingents became more numerous.§ Still the legionaries would not yield, believing that Antony would soon reappear among his faithful soldiers. Rumours of his flight, however, increased and were confirmed; the contingents of the allies retreated hurriedly; on the seventh day Canidius himself took flight. This final blow overthrew the allegiance of Antony's soldiers to the cause which they had hitherto served most loyally. Some of them scattered in Macedonia and others surrendered to Octavianus with the fleet.|| It was on September 9, not upon the 2nd, when nineteen legions, more than ten thousand cavalry and the fleet had surrendered or fled, that Octavianus could claim the victory of Actium. It was a victory gained without fighting, and Antony was defeated in this supreme struggle, not by the valour of his adversary or by his own defective strategy or tactics, but by the hopeless inconsistency of his double-faced policy, which, while professing to be republican and Roman, was actually Egyptian and monarchical.

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 68.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Plutarch, *Ant.* 68; Dion. *li.* 1.

† Dion, *li.* 1.

§ *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FALL OF EGYPT

Slow effects of the victory of Actium—Vacillation of Octavianus after Actium—Change of public feeling in Italy—Antony and Cleopatra at Alexandria—Preparations for attack and defence—The last revolt of the veterans—The downfall of the Egyptian empire—The capture of Alexandria and the death of Antony—His character—The annexation of Egypt—Octavianus seizes the fortune of the Lagidæ—His return to Italy.

Results of the  
victory.

NEITHER Antony nor Octavianus immediately realised the importance of the battle of Actium. Antony had set out reluctantly, as though convinced that his journey was an irreparable mistake; three days later he had halted at Cape Tænarum with Cleopatra, where he learned such vague rumours as were already in circulation. These reports stated that his fleet was lost but that the army remained unimpaired and ready to give battle. Antony immediately sent a message to Canidius to bring the army to Asia by the Macedonian route as quickly as possible; \* he then continued his sea voyage to Alexandria. Meanwhile Octavianus, even after the surrender of the enemy's legions, would not venture, like Cæsar after Pharsalia, to push his advantage and begin the pursuit of the enemy. Antony had constantly emerged triumphant from greater danger and was still famous and powerful; Octavianus, therefore, could hardly consider as final the victory of Actium, which had been won in so strange a manner and almost without a blow. There were also many matters requiring his attention in Greece, and his want of money obliged him to borrow even from his *tribuni militum*. This embarrassment was increased by the surrender of Antony's nineteen legions; he was unable

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 67.



to pay his own troops, much less an additional force. However, the news of the naval success, of the surrender of the army and of Antony's flight gave the impression that Octavianus had won an extraordinary victory and speedily turned public feeling in his favour both in Europe and in Asia. The effects in Greece were naturally immediate. Every town which had formerly done homage to Antony and Cleopatra surrendered at discretion, with the exception of Corinth, which was captured by Agrippa.\* Notwithstanding the inevitable contributions laid upon them, the towns raised statues to Octavianus, decreed honours to him,† and curried favour by denouncing and arresting Antony's partisans. Here Octavianus was confronted by a further embarrassment. Antony and his adherents had not been declared public enemies, and the *imperium* which Octavianus claimed in virtue of the *conjuratio* extended only to the Italians and his own soldiers. How then was he to treat the conquered? Octavianus was inclined to moderation and mercy; but after the victory his partisans were exasperated by the thought of the dangers they had escaped, while Antony's soldiers were infuriated by their supposed betrayal; both parties therefore demanded the punishment of all who were accused of attempts to surrender Italy to the queen of Egypt.

The animosity of the soldiers therefore obliged Octavianus to begin a fresh massacre; ‡ he showed, however, great reluctance, and vacillated between mercy and severity in a manner which often made life or death a matter of chance, depending on some trifle or some short delay. None the less, a considerable number of victims perished, including the son of Cæsar's old ally, Curio, who was for this reason condemned for following his father-in-law.§ From Greece the news of

Vacillation of  
Octavianus.

\* Dion, l. 13, ὕστερον . . .—that is to say, after the battle of Actium, since we see from Plutarch, *Ant.* 67, that Corinth was still in Antony's power some days after the battle.

† See the inscriptions, probably of this date: C. I. G. (Boeck), 1069, 2282, 2283; C. I. L. iii. 7255; C. I. G. (Gr. Sept.) i. 63, 1863.

The eulogy of Velleius, ii. 86, *victoria clementissima*, is somewhat exaggerated. Dion, li. 2, tells us that many were condemned. The passage in the *Mon. Anc.* i. 14 (*Lat.*) which refers to these condemnations is mutilated.

§ Dion, li. 2.

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the victory passed to Asia; that wealthy province was then denuded of troops and unable to offer any resistance to Octavianus; the Asiatic states therefore prepared decrees and statues in honour of Octavianus, and were ready to ask his protection and help. Many of the Asiatic sovereigns who had started from the Ambracian Gulf for their own provinces attempted to open negotiations with the conqueror.\* Thus the news spread, and eventually reached Alexandria, where Canidius himself brought it during the second half of October.† Encouraged by this change of feeling in his favour, Octavianus resolved to disband all the soldiers who had served their time without reward, and ordered Agrippa and Mæcenas to lead a large number of troops back to Italy in October and November.‡ Apart from this decision, he remained inactive, and wasted his time in Greece over his initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries; he would neither keep the promises he had made to secure the *conjuratio* and the power of opposing Antony and Cleopatra, nor would he attempt to arrange any agreement with Antony.

Public feeling  
in Italy.

The vacillation of the conqueror, however, was speedily overcome by an irresistible force, the strength of public feeling in Italy, where the battle of Actium had produced an entire change of opinion. Italy had followed the slow course of the war with discontent, rage and bitterness. After so long a series of deceptions it seemed there could be no hope for the future. The re-establishment of the republic had been repeatedly promised, but none the less two factions were disturbing the Roman world by their conflicts without a shadow of legal justification; the name of Rome had sunk so low that the lives of Italians were not safe in the east, while the social and political unrest of Italy was only paralleled by the economic confusion. Italy had been exhausted by this double government, which for ten years had separated her from the rich and civilised provinces of Asia; a revival of prosperity seemed out of the question; the government of the triumvirs had exhausted the empire and the patience of Italy, by contracting

\* Dion, li. 1.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 71.

‡ Dion, li. 3.



debts upon every side and paying soldiers, tax-gatherers and contractors most irregularly. The public treasury was empty, though enormous sums were required to reorganise the neglected public departments, while money could only be borrowed at a huge rate of interest. Every one was exasperated by this state of affairs, and no one could see any social force sufficiently powerful to end it. Thus it might have been foreseen that Italy's animosity would be concentrated upon the defeated party as the author of all these miseries, though few would have dreamt that after Actium Antony, who had hitherto enjoyed far greater sympathy and favour than his rival, would become the object of universal execration. Antony had presumed too far upon his wealth and power ; his oriental policy had too deeply wounded the national pride and too deeply compromised Italian interests. So long as he seemed more powerful than Octavianus complaints had been cautious and discreet, but when fortune abandoned him his misdeeds came home upon him with crushing weight. Italy attacked him with the wild and unreasoning exasperation aroused by the horrors of civil war ; she had now found some one upon whom she could vent her fury and was ready to flatter the conqueror with servile adulation ; she was sincerely anxious to restore the unity of the empire, to re-establish the republic and the prestige of Rome throughout the world, to return to the greater austerity of traditional Latin manners, in the hope that a revival of Roman power would reopen the stream of tributes from the east, remove the crushing taxation imposed by the triumvirate, facilitate the reorganisation of public departments, and in general revive the former prosperity.

The accusations which the party of Octavianus had been constantly but unsuccessfully attempting to disseminate were now welcomed with indignant credulity. Antony's conduct and mode of life aroused general horror as unworthy of a Roman ; every calumny blackening him or Cleopatra, their relations or their parricidal intentions, was readily believed. In the course of a few days the all-powerful and all-admired triumvir became the great traitor to the national cause ; Horace

Indignation  
with Antony.

31 B.C. himself abandoned his non-political attitude and composed his Ninth Epode in honour of Octavianus' victory over this slave captain, regretting the incredible scandal of a Roman obeying a queen and vile eunuchs, when the 2000 Galatians of Amyntas had refused to enter such unworthy servitude. At Rome a triumph for the victory of Octavianus was decreed; triumphal arches were to be raised to him at Brundisium and in the forum; the temple of Divus Julius was to be decorated with the beaks of the captured vessels; games in honour of the victory were to be celebrated every five years, while Octavianus' birthday and the day when the news had reached Rome were to be days of supplication. On his entry to Rome he was to be met by the vestals, the Senate and the people; Antony's birthday was to be a *dies nefastus*, and every member of Antony's family should be forbidden to bear the name of Marcus.\* Public opinion, however, was not satisfied with honouring the conqueror and taking vengeance upon the conquered. The conquest and annexation of Egypt were universally demanded as the necessary satisfaction for the insult which Cleopatra had inflicted upon Rome by her audacious project of founding a great eastern empire at the expense of Italy. The scruples, the hesitations and the fears which for long had barred the doors of Egypt to Roman politicians were swept away in a moment by this outburst of public feeling. Octavianus had long sought an opportunity to secure his popularity, and now he realised that his chance had come; the conquest of Egypt, the overthrow of Antony and Cleopatra, would establish his reputation for ever. Under the influence of this outcry he threw off all vacillation, and went to Asia towards the close of the year to spend the winter in preparation for the conquest of Egypt.

Antony's  
preparations  
for defence.

This delay, however, had given Antony time to collect his strength and to reorganise his defence. Antony's power

\* Dion, li. 19. In this chapter he enumerates all the honours decreed during the two years which followed the battle of Actium. It seems to me probable, from the nature of these honours, that those which he states as decreed before Antony's death were all, or nearly all, actually decreed upon the news of the battle.



was like a magnificent building, which might be cracked but not destroyed by a sudden earthquake. Notwithstanding recent disasters, he had eleven legions, a fleet, a large treasure, friends, prospects, and, above all, time before him. Had he been able to display the same energy which he had shown after the battle of Modena he might have saved himself once more. But the force of circumstances which Antony had long despised now began to punish his neglect; the inconsistencies of which his proud carelessness had been guilty during years of prosperity were now felt with fatal effect. Upon his soldiers, officers and court he could exert neither the prestige of a Roman proconsul nor the authority of a king of Egypt; age and debauchery had also sapped his vigour. At Alexandria the court officials, his Roman friends, his officers, and even Cleopatra herself, were overcome by uncertainty, vacillation and fear. Herod had hastened to Alexandria and held long consultations with Antony; he gave him advice which was as excellent as it was abominable—to kill Cleopatra, to annex the kingdom of Egypt on behalf of Rome, and thus to give the lie to his enemies who accused him of treachery to the republic for Cleopatra's sake. Italian feeling would then turn in his favour and Octavianus would be forced to suspend the war and conclude some arrangement with him.\* Antony, however, had not the courage to follow this advice; he remained loyal to Cleopatra, and worked, with her help, at the task of defending Egypt, though he was unable to contrive any definite plan; from day to day he would begin contradictory operations, pursuing three or four objects simultaneously with feverish haste, cherishing the wildest designs, producing the most hopeless confusion, and arousing the suspicions of those who still trusted Cleopatra and himself. At length every one began to remark the strangeness of their position. Were they king and queen or husband and wife? Since the defeat Egypt's opposition had grown keener; to crush this movement and to increase their pecuniary resources Antony and Cleopatra put to death the richest and the most determined of their adversaries; they plundered the wealthiest temples, the gold

\* Josephus, A. J. XV. vi. 6.

31 B.C.

and silver being conveyed to the royal palace ; they declared Cæsarion and Antyllus, the son of Antony and Fulvia, as now of age, intending to present them as kings and thus to revive dynastic feeling among the Egyptian people, as enthusiasm for Antony and Cleopatra seemed completely dead. They began to build ships at Alexandria and in the Red Sea and to prepare for flight with their treasure, some said to India, others to Spain ; they recruited soldiers in several provinces and sent ambassadors to kings and sovereigns to confirm their former alliances.\* But they could not decide to concentrate all their forces in Egypt ; the four legions of Cyrene and the three legions of Syria were left in those provinces, lest they should go over to the enemy ; in that case the last visible sign of the great Egyptian empire to which Cleopatra clung would have disappeared.

Despondency  
in Egypt.

Thus navigation was interrupted by the winter of 31-30 before the war between Rome and Egypt had begun. Marcus Licinius Crassus, the son of the triumvir, was one of the consuls appointed for that year. The usual round of festivity began once more at Alexandria, and Cleopatra thus attempted to calm the people ; † the prevailing despondency, however, was profound, and was merely increased by the feverish efforts of Cleopatra, while her spasmodic activity produced nothing but confusion. Public feeling was even reflected in the mournful humour of the idle courtiers ; as if they had some presentiment of their overthrow amid these festivals, they had abandoned their title, "The Society of Inimitables," and called themselves "The Company of Death." ‡ Antony himself had days of zeal and activity, when he attended to festivals and military preparations, but these were succeeded by periods of lethargy and idleness, when he shut himself up alone and would do nothing.§

Preparations  
of Octavianus ;  
the last revolt  
of the  
veterans.

In the meantime Octavianus was spending these months at Samos and the Asiatic towns on the coast, || judging prisoners, settling the affairs of the Asiatic provinces, which he now

\* Dion, li. 5-6 : Plutarch, *Ant.* 69.

† Plutarch, *Ant.* 71.

‡ *Ibid.* 71.

§ *Ibid.* 69.

|| Dion, li. 4 ; Suetonius, *Aug.* 17.



regarded as his own, and preparing for the Egyptian war to satisfy Italian feeling. He pardoned Caius Sossius at the intercession of Lucius Arruntius.\* Amyntas and Archelaus were rewarded as they deserved for their timely desertion to his side. The other petty princes who had supported Antony were all dethroned.† Italy regarded them as guilty of treachery to Rome, and their punishment was inevitable. While Octavianus was thus occupied a small vessel reached Asia about January 1 in the year 30, which had ventured to cross the sea at a time when sailors were accustomed to spend the winter months at home. Great must have been the news which could thus bring this vessel across the deserted and tempestuous waters. It brought letters from Agrippa and Mæcenas, telling Octavianus that the soldiers who had been disbanded without rewards were disturbing the whole of Italy, and threatening to commit the gravest outrages if they were not treated like their comrades who had been discharged before them; Agrippa had been unable to quell the agitation and Octavianus himself must return without delay.‡ This was certainly the last great danger which Octavianus was obliged to face; if Antony heard of it he would regain courage and send his agents to Italy to enlist these desperate veterans. Antony and Cleopatra held the treasure of the Ptolemies, and this, though their last resource, was not to be despised when an army was in mutiny to secure arrears of pay. Octavianus realised the critical nature of the situation, and promptly despatched a ship with a letter in which he gave orders that as many veterans as possible should be sent to Brundisium; shortly afterwards he himself embarked upon this winter voyage, which was then regarded as a most dangerous enterprise. Twice he was nearly shipwrecked, but towards the end of January § he reached Brundisium, where he was awaited by a vast number of senators, knights and petitioners,

\* Velleius, ii. 86.

† Dion, li. 2.

‡ Suetonius, *Aug.* 17; Plutarch, *Ant.* 73; Dion, li. 4.

§ Dion, li. 5, tells us that Antony received simultaneous information of the voyage of Octavianus to Italy and of his return; hence we conclude that Octavianus returned almost as soon as the sea was open for navigation, after March 5. As he remained a month in Italy, he must have reached Brundisium about the end of January.



30 B.C.

who had come from every quarter to do him homage and impede his performance of a task already sufficiently difficult.\* He understood that he must give way and provide the veterans with money and land, but of neither did he possess the smallest amount. He had neither the will nor the power to begin a fresh confiscation, as many of the former revolutionaries had gathered round him to the support of conservatism. Moreover, he was anxious to settle the question without delay and to reappear in Asia before the return of the navigable season should enable news of his movements to reach Antony; the disturbance must be quelled before Antony could hear of it. He promised money to every one, and resolved to buy from the Italian townships a large proportion of their holdings, which we should now call common land; he also decided to deprive of their lands those towns which had refused to take part in the *conjunctio*; on the land of these towns colonies had been founded for Antony's soldiers. The expropriated holders were to be provided with land attached to towns half deserted and beyond the Italian frontiers, such as Dyrrachium and Philippi. The treasure of the Ptolemies would be the guarantee for the future payment of all these promises. The soldiers, however, had been too often deceived, and he therefore wished to give them some earnest of his intentions; he accordingly made some payment on account, for which purpose he drew heavily upon his own private fortune and upon his friends; he even went so far as to put up for sale their Italian property and his own, though no purchaser came forward.†

The necessity  
for the  
conquest of  
Egypt.

At the end of February he set out once more for Asia, and accelerated his journey by crossing the isthmus of Corinth, his ships being carried over on waggon.‡ Thus he reached Asia shortly after navigation had begun, and early enough to deprive Antony of any advantage which his absence might have caused; news of his movements reached Antony either simultaneously or at very short intervals.§ He then resumed his preparations for the Egyptian war with a resolution in strong contrast to the hesitancy of his opponent, and with the sense

\* Dion, li. 4.

† Ibid. 5.

‡ Ibid. 4.

§ Ibid. 5.



30 B.C.

that he was now supported by the whole strength of Italian feeling and by the necessity of establishing his popularity upon a sound basis. The conquest of Egypt was even more necessary for financial than for political reasons. In no other way was it possible to prevent the complete bankruptcy of his party, which would have involved the financial collapse of the republic and of half Italy. Octavianus had only been able to check the recent rising of the troops by contracting a fresh debt, even more enormous than his previous obligations; his agents had taken lands from the Italian towns with promises of payment; the veterans had consented to return home empty-handed, relying upon his promises. These debts must be paid, and paid without delay, if Italy was not to be overwhelmed by vast disruption. Under these conditions, if Antony, whose conquest was already half complete, persisted in his defence of Cleopatra, of Egypt, and of his treasure, he would certainly be lost, seeing that he had to oppose a general who depended upon Egypt for the payment of his Italian debts. These considerations again show the excellence of Herod's advice.

The rumours in circulation during the spring of 30 must have caused Octavianus the gravest anxiety; it was said that Cleopatra was ready to save her treasure by flight across the Red Sea; other rumours said that she had gathered her wealth in a great tomb raised near the temple of Isis, which was to be set on fire if Alexandria fell.\* Octavianus had ordered Cornelius Gallus to march upon Cyrene, and was himself marching upon Syria; but victory was not everything. He must not lose the price of victory, a task yet more difficult than the overthrow of Antony, whose power of energetic and coherent action was destroyed by the vacillation of the Alexandrian court. The four legions of Cyrene were left to their own resources, lost confidence in Antony, and surrendered without a battle; Cornelius Gallus united them with his own force and seized Paretonium.† In Asia Herod lost confidence

The capture  
of Cyrene  
and Syria.

\* Dion, li. 6; Plutarch, *Ant.* 69.

† Dion, li. 9; Orosius, VI. xix. 15; Plutarch, *Ant.* 69. Plutarch is wrong about the date, for this event certainly took place in the year 30, as can be seen from Dion and Orosius.

30 B.C.

in Antony's cause because he would not abandon Cleopatra ; he came to meet Octavianus at Rhodes with fine speeches and large gifts of money, offering his help and a supply of provisions if he were allowed to keep his kingdom.\* Syria also fell into the hands of Octavianus without difficulty ; the governor, Didius, joined his side, and as proof of good faith persuaded the Arabs to burn the fleet which Cleopatra was building in the Red Sea for the transport of her treasures.†

The fall of  
Alexandria  
and the death  
of Antony.

At this moment, however, an extraordinary series of negotiations began. On hearing that the army of Cyrene had deserted him, Antony had thought of suicide ; then he recovered courage and proposed to go to Paretonium and attempt to recall the allegiance of his soldiers ; first, however, he sent an embassy to Octavianus proposing peace and offering presents. This was a feint to gain time and to postpone the war until he could return to Alexandria.‡ Meanwhile Cleopatra was sending embassies of a similar nature ; Octavianus gave no definite answer, but sent one of his freedmen, Thyrsius, with orders to intimate to Cleopatra that he was in love with her and would be inclined to leave her in possession of Egypt if she would secure the death of Antony.§ Notwithstanding the public hostility of Italy, Antony was no ordinary senator, who could be handed over to the soldiers for execution ; if his disappearance, like that of Pompeius, could be brought about, and Octavianus could avoid any implication in the affair, the most desirable solution of the difficulty would be reached. It is therefore likely that Octavianus hoped to deceive Cleopatra and induce her to kill Antony ; he would then secure Alexandria with the Egyptian treasure untouched, would represent himself as Antony's avenger and execute Cleopatra for her crime. Thus a series of diplomatic lies were in course of exchange between Octavianus, Antony and Cleopatra ; while Antony was fighting at Paretonium, where he not only failed to win back his soldiers, but lost some of his ships, Cleo-

\* Josephus, *A. J.* XV. vi. 6 ff.

† Dion, li. 7.

‡ Dion, li. 8 ; Plutarch, *Ant.* 72. The texts referring to these embassies are very confused. Plutarch puts them in the autumn of 31, which is scarcely credible.

§ Plutarch, *Ant.* 73 ; Dion, li. 8.



patra was listening to the perfidious falsehoods of Octavianus. She saw her empire falling into ruin about her, and began to hope that she might at least preserve Egypt if she would betray Antony and surrender to Octavianus. On his return from Paretonium various indications aroused Antony's suspicions of some change in Cleopatra, but at first she was clever enough to lull the apprehensions of the simple Roman. These suspicions, however, were soon reawakened by a more serious event; when Octavianus reached Pelusium he was able to seize the town almost without striking a blow. Once again Antony asked whether Cleopatra had not given orders that Pelusium should be surrendered. Once again Cleopatra calmed him,\* and as Octavianus drew nearer she pretended to help in the defence of Alexandria by the issue of warlike edicts. This was the final effort. The story of the defence of Alexandria has been related in so confused a manner by the ancient historians that the actual course of events can no longer be determined; this much, however, is certain: on August 1 a great battle was to be fought before Alexandria; at the last moment Antony's army and fleet betrayed him, apparently in obedience to Cleopatra's secret orders; the queen, fearing the rage of the man she had betrayed, took refuge in her tomb, and Antony, considering that all was lost, committed suicide. The same day Octavianus entered Alexandria, accompanied by his master, Didymus Areus, a native of that town.† The victory was followed by a further massacre, happily the last of these blood-stained years. Octavianus put to death Cæsarion and Antyllus, the eldest son of Antony and Fulvia, who had already been given royal honours; he also executed Canidius, who knew the secret of the victory of Actium, Cassius Parmensis, the last survivor of the conspirators, and Q. Ovinus, the senator who had become overseer of the royal weaving factories at Alexandria.‡

Thus died the last and the most famous of Cæsar's generals. Posterity, merciless as ever to the defeated, has judged him with undue severity. Notwithstanding his many faults of

The character of Antony and the death of Cleopatra.

\* Plutarch, *Ant.* 74.

† Orosius, VI. xix. 16; Dion, li. 10; Plutarch, *Ant.* 75-80.

‡ Orosius, VI. xix. 20; Plutarch, *Ant.* 81.

30 B.C. judgment, Mark Antony has every right to be regarded as Cæsar's political heir. He knew the dictator's last thoughts, the most important of his papers were in his hands, and he attempted to realise Cæsar's last projects by turning Rome towards the east and to Asiatic civilisation and attempting to use the strength of Italy for the foundation of a great monarchy, such as the successors of Alexander had enjoyed. Doubtless his ill-balanced and sensual character, his powerful but inconsistent mind, which rendered his every effort abortive, were responsible for his failure to achieve Cæsar's programme. But Cæsar as well as Antony had failed to carry out the oriental and monarchical policy, and it would be somewhat rash to say that this failure was the result of pure accident. Antony did not possess Cæsar's mighty intellect, but he was confronted by obstacles equally great; he had to face, not a powerful republican aristocracy, but a mass of obscure politicians, without weight, easily led and utterly incapable of sacrificing themselves for the republican idea, as the greatest Roman families had done, from the Ides of March to the battle of Philippi. None the less the fear of Egyptian domination disseminated by Octavianus had so far terrified Italy that at Actium Antony's opponent could triumph almost without striking a blow. The failure of Cæsar and Antony is therefore due, not merely to the mistakes, the precipitation, or the weakness of those who attempted this revolution, but also to the fact that the time was not yet ripe and that the power of one man, whatever its extent, was unable in the course of a few years to overcome the numerous obstacles in the way of this project. The collapse of Antony's policy involved Egypt in its fall. From her hiding-place Cleopatra attempted to bargain for peace with threats that she would burn her treasure. Octavianus was able to confine her in the royal palace, depriving her of any means of suicide, while he played her with ambiguous proposals, intending to bring her to Rome for his triumph. Cleopatra, however, mistrusted him; she was willing to live while she hoped to save some part of her power; but when she realised that the conqueror was saving her for his triumph she was ready to die. She was found one day upon her bed,



adorned in all the splendour of her royal robes, cold in death, with two slaves already dead or in the last agonies. How she killed herself has never been known. The story goes that she was poisoned by venomous serpents sent to her in a basket of fruit, and this account has found the most general credence.\*

30 B.C.

With Cleopatra perished the last remnant of the Alexandrian empire, the ancient and glorious kingdom of the Ptolemies. Pergamum and Antioch had fallen, and now came the turn of Alexandria. The Roman world-policy, upon which the republic entered after the close of the second Punic war, had now won its last great triumph, and after a hundred and seventy years Egypt was added to the Mediterranean empire of Rome. The country was treated with moderation; the conqueror strove to spare the national pride and respected the venerable dynastic tradition, to which the people were still profoundly attached; the land of the Pharaohs was not reduced to a Roman province. Following Antony's policy, though upon more reasonable lines, Octavianus announced at Rome that he had conquered Egypt on behalf of Italy, while before the Egyptians he posed as the new king and successor of the extinct dynasty; instead of the usual *proprætor* or *proconsul*, a *præfectus* was appointed as governor of the country; this representative resembled an Asiatic governor more nearly than a Roman *proconsul*.† The first *præfectus* was Cnæus Cornelius Gallus, Virgil's great friend. The citizens, however, were forced to pay an indemnity amounting to one-sixth of their property, and other sums were extorted from the rich under different pretexts; the vast treasure of the Lagidæ, a marvellous collection of delicate gold and silver ornaments in the museum of artistic objects which the countless artists of the east had laboured during two centuries to form, was ruthlessly melted down for purposes of coinage.‡ From these

The treatment  
of Egypt by  
Rome.

\* Orosius, VI. xix. 18; Dion, li. 11-14; Plutarch, *Ant.* 82-86. Readers who desire a detailed account of the last days of Antony and Cleopatra should refer to the splendid history given by M. Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, ii. pp. 315-344. These pages are a masterpiece of historical criticism and narrative.

† Cp. Mon. Anc. v. 24 (lat.), where Augustus says that he might have been able *Armeniam majorem facere provinciam* . . ., but adds *Ægyptum imperio populi Romani adjeci*.

‡ Suetonius, *Aug.* 71.

30 B.C. treasures the officers were at once rewarded with considerable sums, the soldiers at length received their pay, and great fortunes were made in a few days by the members of Augustus' suite.\*

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero  
Pulsanda tellus. . . .

So ran the joyful song of Horace, who was now wholly converted; in his enthusiasm he consented to glorify the conqueror by versifying the absurd legend concerning Cleopatra and depicting the queen who

Capitolio  
    : : : dementes ruinas  
Funus et imperio parabat  
Contaminato cum grege turpium  
Morbo virorum. . . .

If the battle of Actium had not been fought to save the power of Rome, it had at any rate saved the little Sabine estate of Horace, and there he was able henceforward to write his odes and epistles in peace. It was not servitude to Egypt, but bankruptcy, that Italy had escaped. Honours were forthwith showered upon the fortunate conqueror. His birthday and the anniversary of the fall of Alexandria were declared public festivals; a second triumph was decreed to him, all his measures up to this date were ratified; he was given the right of deciding all trials on appeal, in which he was to have a casting vote; other tribunician privileges were given to him, but their nature is uncertain; finally it was decided that the thirty-five tribes should each make an offering to him of a thousand pounds of gold.†

The popularity  
of Octavianus.

Italy was animated by strange enthusiasm; Octavianus' past career was forgotten, and he now became the object of universal admiration; victory had ennobled him, as it had ennobled Sulla and Cæsar in the eyes of the aristocratic public which was now in its decadence and deteriorated by the mercantile spirit and the democratic policy. Opposition to the leader of the army who was in possession of Cleopatra's treasure was now out of the question. Such power and popularity enabled Octavianus to act as he pleased and to seize his oppor-

\* Dion, li. 17.

† Dion, li. 19; Mon. Ancs iv. 25 ff.



tunity to make himself the richest of living men by boldly grasping for himself and his friends the private fortune of the Egyptian kings ; this consisted of a vast number of cultivated lands, plantations of palm-trees, fisheries, mines and the income from certain taxes upon religious ceremonies. The grandson of the money-lender of Velletri seized the immense fortune of the Lagidæ as their successor. Part he divided among his friends, giving, for instance, a large estate to Mæcenas; for the administration of his own share he maintained in Egypt the overseer of the royal domains, the Idiologos ; this official was associated with the governor of the country, and was ordered to send annually to Rome the rents derived from fields, houses and mines and the revenue from the religious taxes ; notwithstanding the confusion and disorder of the war, these taxes in the last days of the Egyptian monarchy had amounted to six thousand talents—about a million pounds of our money.\* After plundering the treasure of the Lagidæ, the band of Roman brigands flung themselves upon the property of the crown, and new fortunes were made from day to day. Octavianus then returned by the route he had come, issuing orders, receiving homage and acting as the sovereign of the empire. To Artaxerxes, who was already governor of Media Atropatene, he gave Armenia Minor ; Herod received Samaria—that is to say, the Syrian coast-line from the frontier of Egypt to Tyre ; Cleon was recognised as Prince of Cumana in Pontus ; Octavianus also extended a friendly welcome to Tiridates, who claimed the throne of Parthia, and thus demonstrated to Italy his intention of completing the enterprise in which Antony had failed.† He also replaced in the eastern temples many of the statues which Antony and Cleopatra had carried away ; ‡ certain towns, such as Nicomedia and Pergamum, requested his permission to build temples to him as to their former sovereigns ; this he granted on condition that the temples were dedicated simultaneously to Rome and to himself.§

Thus Octavianus concluded the year 30 and began the year

\* Strabo, XVII. i. 12 (797). Cp. on this question Rostowzew, *Philol.*, vol. lvii. ff., 564 ff.

† Dion, li. 18 ; Mon. Anc. v. 54.

‡ Mon. Anc. iv. 49.

§ Dion, li. 20.

29 B.C.  
Octavianus'  
return to Italy.

29 in the east. He eventually returned to Italy in the spring ; towards the end of 30 the son of Lepidus had attempted to raise an Italian revolt, which Mæcenas had suppressed without difficulty.\* Public admiration knew no bounds for the man who led back so many ships loaded with gold and so brilliant a train of officers and generals, who had gone forth in poverty and were returning with the plundered wealth of the Ptolemies. Fresh honours were continually showered upon Octavianus ; his name was inserted in the *carmen saliare* ; priestesses offered prayer for him at public worship, and libations were poured in his honour at every public and private banquet.† His arrival in Italy was greeted with a magnificent outburst of enthusiasm ; he was suffering from an attack of laryngitis, doubtless contracted during the war, and therefore remained for a time at Atella, where Virgil came to meet him ; the poet spent four days in reading his *Georgics* to him, which were now finished,‡ and also expressed his desire to write an epic poem upon his exploits.§ The successive triumphs, which were at length celebrated on August 13, 14 and 15 of the year 29,|| were highly imposing, and wonderful festivals were held in the second half of August to inaugurate the monuments symbolising the final victory of Cæsar in the civil wars ; these were the temple of Divus Julius, inaugurated on August 18,¶ then the *Curia Julia*, with the sanctuary of Minerva and the *Ara Victoriæ* in the *Curia Julia*.\*\* Italy was intoxicated with delight ; and this last descendant of the many illustrious men who had fought for the domination of the Roman world seemed once for all to have secured the inheritance of Alexander and of Rome. Two centuries of war and conquest, of world-wide devastation, of ruin and despair were now closed, and the result seemed to be the elevation of Octavianus and his few friends to the very pinnacle of fame.

\* Velleius, ii. 88.

† Mon. Anc. ii. 21.

‡ Donatus, p. 61, R.

§ Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 46.

|| Dion, li. 21 ; Livy, *Ep.* 133 ; Suetonius, *Aug.* 22. The dates of these three days are gained by a comparison of the statements of historians and the indications given by the *Tabulæ Barberinianæ* (C. I. L. i. p. 478) and the *Fasti Antiatini* (C. I. L. x. 6638).

¶ C. I. L. i. p. 399 ; Dion, li. 22.

\*\* Dion, li. 22.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE RESTORATION OF THE REPUBLIC

Octavianus wishes to retire to private life—Monarchy and republic—The return to republican tradition—Monarchy impossible at Rome—The difficulty of organising a government—The reforms of Octavianus in 28—The fundamental idea of his political reform—Octavianus as sole president of the republic—Augustus—The restoration of the republic—Augustus rather the antithesis to Cæsar than his political follower.

UNLIMITED power was not, however, the ideal of Octavianus ; at this moment he proposed to imitate, not Cæsar, but Sulla, and to abandon politics.\* An ancient historian of high credibility states the fact, and there is no sufficient reason to dispute it. Octavianus' objects and future policy.

Octavianus' first task upon his return to Italy was the distribution of Cleopatra's treasure. With remarkable energy he annulled all the State claims—that is to say, not merely the arrears of taxation, but the private claims of knights proscribed in 43, which had been confiscated by the State. He thus gave legal force to that abolition of debt which had already occurred in practice ; he settled all his own debts and those of the republic.† He paid the municipalities for the land purchased from them in the preceding year, and divided probably more than three hundred million sesterces among them in hard cash ;‡ he distributed four hundred sesterces apiece

\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 28: *De reddenda republica bis cogitavit: primo post oppressum statim Antonium.* . . . This is a most valuable piece of information, not only because it is given by so scrupulous a historian as Suetonius, but because there is no further reason for doubting it. It has been unduly disregarded upon the theory that it contradicts the tradition which represents Octavianus as the ambitious founder of an absolute monarchy.

† Dion, li. 21.

‡ Mon. Anc. iii. 22. Augustus estimates the land bought that year

28 B.C. to every plebeian—that is, to more than two hundred and fifty thousand men\*—and a thousand sesterces apiece to the hundred and twenty thousand veterans to whom he had given land.† In this number were included the six or seven thousand veterans of Cæsar, disbanded after the battle of Philippi, the twenty thousand legionaries sent home after the Sicilian war, and the ninety thousand who made up the thirty-seven legions under himself or Antony; these latter had been recently disbanded when Octavianus resolved to reduce the whole of the imperial army to twenty-three legions.‡ Thus he had saved Italy from her impending bankruptcy, had brought money into circulation and had lowered the rate of interest.§ Octavianus, however, was well aware that an infinitely heavier task lay before the future leader of the republic—the task of organising a government able to secure peace, order and prosperity in Italy and the provinces. The festivities in his honour and the power granted to him were merely evidence of the universal desire for a wise and strong government; for this benefit the public looked to Octavianus. Whatever public opinion of his energy and genius may have been, it would not have been surprising if Octavianus had regarded such a task with hesitation, or even with fear. Had Octavianus been a man of action, a Cæsar or an Alexander, he might have conceived wider ambitions at this moment and regarded his immediate power and glory as marking the initial stages of a dazzling career. Octavianus, however, was an intellectual character, resembling rather Brutus and Cicero than Cæsar, cold, prudent and calculating, undisturbed by vast ambition or immoderate thirst for pleasure; a patient worker and far-sighted administrator, his strength consisted rather in the subtlety, lucidity and in the year 14 as equivalent to six hundred million sesterces, and I have assumed that more than half this sum was expended at the present moment.

\* Mon. Anc. iii. 8 ff.

† Mon. Anc. iii. 17.

‡ Mommsen, *Res Gestæ D. A.* iii. 46–50, believes that after the battle of Actium Octavianus reduced his legions to eighteen; but Robert, *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1868, p. 93 ff., and Pfitzner, *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiserlegionen*, Leipzig, 1881, p. 14 ff., seem to have demonstrated that from the outset the number of the legions was twenty-three.

§ Dion, li. 21; Suetonius, *Aug.* 41.



and precision of his mind than in the greatness of his imagination or the energy of his ambition. His health had grown so feeble that he could not even endure the fatigue of the festivals given in honour of his various victories, and during the celebration of them he was indisposed upon several occasions.\* Though but thirty-five years of age, he was prematurely old, sickly, nervous, sated with wealth, glory and power, while opportunities were now offered to him which demanded sound health, vast energy and almost unlimited self-confidence.

There is therefore no reason why he should not have contemplated a refusal at any rate for a time, for the task before him was difficult in the extreme. Modern historians attempt to simplify the matter by asserting that the republic was dead and that after Actium the empire was bound to fall under the domination of one master, who would govern as he pleased. The immense difficulties of the situation, however, must have been far plainer to Octavianus, who had to solve them, than to his historians twenty centuries later. The organisation of supreme power is undoubtedly the most serious question in any form of government; nor does it as thus stated represent the whole problem; the head of a republic or the sovereign of a monarchy cannot govern his State unaided; he requires helpers, representatives, agents and officials. Thus the problem connected with the supreme power is bound up with the further and no less important question of the governmental instruments to be used. The gift to Octavianus of the dictatorship, of the power, authority and title of king would have been but a half solution of the terrible political problem which then confronted Rome. Was the empire to be governed, like the Asiatic monarchies of Alexander's successors, by a bureaucracy recruited from every social class and nationality at the goodwill of the absolute leader, or was the governmental power to be wielded by republican magistrates elected by the *comitia* and by the Senate from the Roman citizens, according to the laws of the old constitution? Or, again, should some compromise between the two systems be attempted? Monarchical government would not merely imply the establishment

28 B.C.

The difficulty of Octavianus' task.

\* Dion, li. 22, liii. 1.



28 B.C.

of a dynasty at Rome; it would also imply the rise of a cosmopolitan bureaucracy in which careers would be opened to intelligent and energetic men throughout the empire without distinction of nationality; this would mark the end of that political monopoly which had hitherto been maintained in Rome by the great families of the senatorial aristocracy, the more numerous body of knights and of middle-class citizens who voted in the *comitia*. Towards the end of his life Julius Cæsar had attempted to introduce this principle by entrusting a large number of offices to his soldiers and freedmen; the triumvirs and Sextus Pompeius had done the same during the civil wars. Was it now possible or advisable to continue the development of this system, or was it better to return to Roman constitutional traditions?

The new  
oligarchy.

Such was the question of the moment, and if Octavianus did not tremble at his responsibility he must have been a madman. The triumvirate, a weak government based upon force, had been obliged in a moment of crisis to increase the senators and magistrates by distributing the honours of the Roman nobility among the Italian middle class. Thus, though many of the nobility had perished in the civil wars, a new and more numerous oligarchy had risen in their place, composed of senators, former quæstors, prætors and consuls, and drawn for the most part from nonentities without reputation or wealth; though these men had not the honour or the titles of the old nobility, they were none the less attached to the rights and privileges of the positions which they had unexpectedly secured. This oligarchy of upstarts undoubtedly displayed every feature of the selfishness which had weakened the governing class at Rome during the last century, from the dislike of marriage to the dislike of official posts. Few were ready to work on behalf of the State without hope of reward; no one, for instance, would accept the ædileship, in which money must be spent without prospect of return. Though self-denial and patriotism were rare, the desire to preserve the honour and prestige of power was keen and obstinate. Thus the republic centred round an oligarchy created by the chances of revolution, a widespread clique of retired centurions who



had become senators; though useless for any serious work, these upstarts could not be discarded, as was proved by the attempt of Octavianus at the outset of 28 to purify the Senate by removing the most unworthy members of it. This was a necessary measure; Octavianus as consul had ordered a census to be taken after an interval of forty-two years,\* and proposed to turn the occasion to advantage by drawing up a list of nearly two hundred senators; he spared them the shame of dismissal, but requested their resignations, which would deprive them of their senatorial seats and of the prerogatives attaching to their rank. The attempt was useless. Only sixty gave way, and a hundred and forty awaited dismissal.† Yet whenever important and expensive business was on foot the Senate invariably applied to Octavianus, and even entrusted him with the task of repairing eighty-two temples at Rome which were falling into ruins as a result of neglect during the civil war.‡

The obstacles thus raised by the self-interest and ambition of the revolutionary oligarchy were very insignificant in comparison with the difficulty of dealing with public feeling, which declared ever more emphatically in favour of the old Roman traditions. It was a movement inspired by racial and national pride and by admiration for the past, and it not only prevented the future government from choosing officials outside the pale of the narrow Roman citizen oligarchy, but wished to confine all official posts to the remnants of the old nobility. The revolution directed to the destruction of the aristocracy had been succeeded in every class, especially in the middle and intellectual classes, by a rapid change of feeling in favour of the historical nobility, as the only class capable of governing the empire. The most important document produced by this change is the great Roman history then begun by a young man of Padua, Titus Livius, who wrote in the traditional style of the annals, illuminated by the grace and power of high literary skill, for the purpose of immortalising the old aristocratic government, the diplomacy and wisdom of earlier ages. His purpose was not merely to show that the

The revival  
of republican  
tradition;  
Livy's  
history.

\* Mon. Anc. ii. 2.

† Dion, 52-42; Suetonius, *Aug.* 35.

‡ Mon. Anc. iv. 17.

28 B.C.

greatness of Rome was the work of the aristocracy; he also made a bold defence of the leaders who had fallen in the great struggle with democracy, in particular of Pompey; of Cæsar himself his criticism was too severe.\* Such a history of Rome, the work of a great writer, a friend of Octavianus, in close relations with every leader of the revolutionary oligarchy, could never have been written, had not these ideas been widespread in every influential class, and even among the adherents of the future head of the State. In any case, such a change of feeling was wholly natural; the public had been horrified by the utter confusion of the Roman world and panic-stricken by the signs of growing weakness of which Actium had been the clearest proof. The conclusion of the civil war and the constitutional reform which established the kingdom of Augustus can only be understood when the historian has realised the passionate and almost religious admiration of Italy for the Roman aristocracy. It may be granted that the political system which Italy had maintained for two centuries was absurd. It was impossible for a petty aristocracy at Rome to govern so vast an empire. The defects of the system were infinite, and became more obvious in proportion as the empire grew and as the nobility were torn by their dissensions. The instrument of government was too weak for its purpose, and its powers had been further impaired by the civil war. Yet it was a system of long standing, in spite of the vice, the corruption and the fearful discord of the aristocracy. During the hundred and fifty years before the battle of Actium a tremendous and doubtful struggle for supremacy had been waged between the Mediterranean States. Italy had then realised—and this was the chief cause of her success—that sound administration, domestic peace, justice and order, in fact, all that is reasonably demanded from a State under ordinary conditions, were then matters of wholly secondary importance; that the chief requirement was a strong military and diplomatic government, able to defend and to extend the political and economic interests of Rome in the midst of this terrific crisis. For more than a century the Roman aristocracy had spent its strength

\* See Seneca, *Nat. Quæst.* V. xviii. 44



in providing the empire with generals, officers and diplomatists as required; notwithstanding mistakes and occasional checks, it had emerged triumphant from every struggle and had retained its power in spite of its vicious corruption and appalling discord. Thus military affairs, foreign policy and the aristocracy had at length become inseparable in the eyes of the Italian public, which was unable to conceive that high commands or important offices of state could be conferred upon citizens of humble birth. Democratic feeling as known to us was almost inconceivable at Rome; the middle and lower classes, far from coveting high political posts, invariably confined their efforts to securing economic advantage for themselves. They were entirely convinced that only the noble families were capable of conducting policy or war, and never even dreamed that the son of a peasant or citizen could lead an army or govern a State. We find that every leader of the popular party was a noble of the old stock. Even during the last revolution, the most disastrous of all to the nobility, the first cry of Cæsar's party had been land and money, not democratic equality. The course of events had hurried to a tragical issue; the democratic party had eventually massacred most of the nobility, and when nobles were no longer forthcoming, many important posts were necessarily given to freedmen, to plebeians and to other nonentities. Yet the result of this democratic revolution had merely strengthened those ideas, tendencies and traditions, which were utterly opposed to democracy.

When the nobility had been overthrown, the unity and power of the empire, the vast interests concentrated about the provinces had been most seriously endangered. The empire had been divided, revolts had broken out in many provinces and foreign wars had been in general unsuccessful. The democratic ventures attempted after Philippi by such men as a retired muleteer made consul had ended in Cleopatra's audacious stroke, the disgraceful events of Actium, and the present situation, which was dangerous and uncertain to the last degree. Almost the whole of Spain was in revolt; \* Marcus Crassus had been obliged to invade Mysia and to attack

The failure  
of democratic  
government.

\* Dion, li. 20-21.

28 B.C

the Bastarni in order to defend Macedonia,\* while revolts were breaking out even in Egypt.† It was thus only natural that Italy in such a situation should once more turn its gaze to the great aristocracy, which had always proved successful, had conquered the empire, and was therefore best able to defend it. The historical evidence brought forward by Livy had merely strengthened the general opinion. If, therefore, Octavianus had attempted to give high posts and provincial governments to foreigners and freedmen or to organise a cosmopolitan bureaucracy, he would have profoundly wounded public feeling and have spread panic among the revolution oligarchy. After the scandals, the failures, the disasters and the long confusion of the triumvirate Octavianus could not possibly secure either the power or the authority to oppose so many interests and such widespread feeling; Cæsar himself had been unequal to such a task, after the conquest of Gaul and the victories of the civil war. The situation of Octavianus was extraordinary indeed. The battle of Actium and the conquest of Egypt had secured his reputation, and his past history was now forgotten, but he did not enjoy the terrible prestige of Sulla with the conservatives on his return from Asia, nor of Cæsar with the people after Pharsalia. He could not expect that the profitable but easy conquest of Egypt would be regarded as adequate compensation for the infinite evils which his party and the triumvirate government had inflicted upon Italy. A less prudent and more imaginative man might have been deceived, but Octavianus realised the facts. Moreover, he had before his eyes the example of Antony, who had suddenly fallen from the height of prosperity to the depths of ruin, because he had wounded the interests and prejudices of the Italian oligarchy. He was now lauded to the skies, as Antony had been a few years previously, and he might have secured absolute power; but Antony's example warned him that any failure or serious disaster, for which the situation provided every opportunity, would produce an outburst of animosity; the wrath of a nation would burst

\* Dion, li. 21-26.

† Cp. the trilingual inscription at Philæ, in *Sitz. Ber. König. Preuss. Akad.*, 1896, p. 478.



upon his head and the hatreds of civil war, though now forgotten, would suddenly be revived. 28 B.C.

Thus, whatever authority Octavianus might have in the future reorganisation of the State, he was bound to recall the historical aristocracy to power, to use it in the course of government and to conceal his own action behind its authority. At this point a new and more serious difficulty became apparent. The last revolution had dealt a severe blow to the nobility. Many families had disappeared, others had been ruined, while those who survived the disasters of the last great crisis were utterly despondent. Even the leading members of his own party were anxious for repose. Asinius Pollio was a great friend of Octavianus, but regarded himself as the equal of Cæsar's son; \* he now proposed to devote himself to art and literature and to write a great history of the civil wars.† Marcus Crassus, the son of the millionaire triumvir, who had married the daughter of Metellus Creticus, was then fighting in the Balkans; in view of his wealth he would probably be unwilling to spend further time upon State business. Valerius Messala might perhaps be available, but he had remained a fervent republican and would not conceal his loyal admiration of Brutus, even from Octavianus. Mæcenas seems to have cared little whether a monarchy or republic were forthcoming; he wished to retire from the burden of politics and enjoy his wealth; he would not even become a senator at any price; the energetic and resourceful Agrippa was thus the only man upon whom Octavianus could wholly rely.

In short the aristocracy, the traditional instrument of government, was even feebler than it had been at the beginning of the civil war; yet it was more necessary than ever before. Notwithstanding the statement of modern historians, Italy was by no means ripe for monarchy at this time; she still needed the old aristocracy, which her fit of madness had nearly exterminated in 43 and 42. Upon this foundation was based her military organisation and her system of foreign policy; the destruction of the nobility implied the collapse of both. There was no school of military training in the Roman empire;

\* Cp. Seneca, *De ira*, iii. 23.

† Horace, *Od.* II. i. 1.



28 B.C.

*C. Marius?*

the noble families of Rome formed the military school where officers and generals were prepared for war; the Italian soldier was accustomed to obey none but the bearers of historical names. Similarly with regard to the subject races, the Roman power had been so long personified by the Senate and the senators that no province would have meekly submitted to the government of some oriental with a general's title and commission to represent the new monarchy of Rome. If in the face of these insoluble problems Octavianus in a moment of weakness thought of following Sulla's example, his intention was neither inconsistent with human nature nor derogatory to himself, so vast was the burden that he was asked to bear.

Octavianus' immediate measures.

In any case Octavianus was obliged to reserve his final decision and attempt to provide for the most pressing needs of governmental administration, for the situation throughout the empire would brook no delay. He did his utmost to accelerate the foundation of colonies in Italy and abroad; he even entertained Cæsar's idea of colonising Carthage and Corinth; he attempted to transform the greater part of his or Antony's soldiers into comfortable landed proprietors, dividing among ninety thousand veterans the common lands purchased after Actium and making these new landholders decurions of the little municipal senates. Thus the famous warriors of the civil wars were settled in a large number of towns, which certainly included Ateste, Brescia, Parma, Tortona, Rimini, Fano, Spello and Pisa; there they proposed to end their lives in peace as citizens, living upon the land and booty gathered during the revolution. It was, moreover, vitally important to find some means of filling the State treasury, which was invariably empty. Octavianus himself contributed a large sum to this purpose, but did not seize the opportunity as he might easily have done, to appropriate the public treasury and thus to follow Cæsar's example. He would not undertake the responsibility of its administration; at the same time he did not wish the treasury to remain in the hands of the former magistrates, whose administration had proved wholly unreliable. He therefore adopted a compromise and decided that the care of the finances should be entrusted to two *præfecti ærarii*



*saturni*,\* chosen annually by the Senate from the senators who had held the prætorship. Thus he handed over to the party the most valuable plunder of the civil war, the imperial treasury. Successive renunciations of the kind would have led him to complete restitution, if a return to private life had been open to him. 28 B.C.

Octavianus, however, was the most important, the most powerful and the richest personage in the republic. The wish that he should remain at the head of affairs was overwhelming, and was shared by the veterans who had received land, the purchasers of confiscated property, the magistrates and senators appointed by the triumvirs, and, indeed, by every participator in the bloody revolution struggle; from Agrippa himself to the lowest centurion, all regarded the power of Octavianus as the one guarantee for the maintenance of present conditions. Thus it is not surprising that his friends strove to overcome his hesitation and despondency during the year 28. They could advance the most cogent reasons for his retention of power, and though we have no direct evidence of these arguments, they may readily be conjectured from their effects. They doubtless demonstrated the impossibility of re-establishing the old constitution in its entirety. That constitution was based upon two principles, the simultaneous choice of several colleagues in each office and brevity of tenure. While life had been simple, morality pure, the aristocracy strong and tradition vigorous, the constitution, thanks to these principles, worked admirably. But with the break-up of the traditional morality these principles had become the immediate cause of the appalling confusion which had nearly overwhelmed the republic. The principle of brief tenure of office, maintained amid the desperate struggle of party interests and ideas, had utterly destroyed the continuity of government. The system of appointing at least two colleagues for each magistracy with identical powers had become a formidable means of party obstruction; whenever one party secured possession of office they used their nominee to hamper the action of the magistrate

Octavianus is  
unable to  
return to  
private life.

\* Dion, liii. 22; Hirschfeld, *Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der röm. Verwaltung*, Berlin, 1876, p. 10.

28 B.C. elected by their opponents These calamities would surely be repeated if the old republic were restored with all its forms and methods.

Cicero's theory  
of a chief  
magistrate.

It was essential that there should be at least one authority sufficiently strong to check party strife thus conducted. Cicero's tastes had invariably been more conservative than revolutionary; yet in his *De Republica* he had borrowed and developed the idea of Polybius and Aristotle that when the State was torn by intestine discord, some supreme magistrate must be appointed who would be subject to the common laws of the State and therefore republican, but whose powers would be more extended and wider in their operations than those of ordinary magistrates; thus by his personal authority as well as by his legal powers he would be able to prevent individual offices and magistracies from neglecting their duties or encroaching upon the area reserved to other offices by the constitution. The only possible candidate for this new post was the victor of Actium. A further consideration must have profoundly influenced the decision of Octavianus. During the recent economic crisis the wealth of Egypt had alone saved Italy from bankruptcy and from a second revolution; Egypt must therefore be regarded as the chief source of wealth, at any rate for the immediate future. The fortunes of Octavianus, of his family and of many of his illustrious friends, such as Mæcenas, now chiefly consisted in Egyptian lands. It would be most dangerous to place a proconsul over so proud and excitable a people, where monarchical sentiment was so strong, and which could look back to a government by kings from its very origin. It seemed advisable to delude the Egyptians with the idea that they were governed by a monarch, even if he were resident far away at Rome, provided that he sent his minister to Alexandria. This monarch, again, could be none other than the conqueror of Egypt, and Egypt would not accept Octavianus as her sovereign unless he remained at the head of the republic.

Octavianus'  
legal position.

Octavianus must have yielded eventually to these arguments; he resolved to put the ideas of the *De Republica* into practice and to preserve the smallest amount of authority essential to



secure the continuance of peace and order. The chief menace to the public peace arose from the division of the military command; each army had its own leader under the authority of the Senate, and the feeble or spasmodic efforts of that body allowed bold and clever generals to use the armies in the service of their own ambition, and even for civil war. Octavianus therefore consented to retain the command of all armies, so that officers and soldiers were dependent upon him and responsible to him; he would not, however, take the supreme command by any but legal means. He secured a decree from the Senate conferring upon him for ten years the proconsulship of all provinces where troops must be maintained for any permanent or temporary reason. At the moment these provinces were but three in number: Syria, which might be invaded at any time by the Parthians, with which was included the island of Cyprus; Transalpine Gaul, where the frontiers were disturbed; and Spain, which had now been in revolt for some time. The remaining provinces, which were also the wealthiest, were administered by the ordinary republican magistrates, by the proconsuls and proprætors, appointed as usual by the Senate. All its traditional powers were to be restored to the Senate, and the *comitia* would resume the election of magistrates and the ratification of laws.\*

At the same time some supreme authority was required at Rome to supervise the city officials and to rouse or check the action of the Senate as might be necessary. Octavianus consented to perform this duty, and agreed to become an annual candidate for the consulship during the ten years of his proconsulship. Thus he would be consul and proconsul simultaneously and while residing at Rome as consul he would govern the provinces through his legates; if he went to the provinces as proconsul, he would govern Rome and Italy from a distance as consul. At the same time, as head of the Roman State, he could be regarded by the Egyptians as their king and as the legitimate heir of the Ptolemies; thus within reasonable limits he continued the strange policy of Antony, in which, notwithstanding its exaggeration, there had been a

Octavianus as  
princeps.

\* Dion, liii. 12-13.

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certain necessity, seeing that it was continued by his rival after his death. This union of the two magistracies, the consulship and proconsulship, which were mutually exclusive, according to the old constitution, was certainly a revolutionary innovation. It was not, however, unprecedented, and had already been tried for some months in the year 52, when Pompey had been appointed consul and proconsul simultaneously during the panic aroused by the disturbances following the death of Clodius and by the revolt of Vercingetorix. In any case, it was a far less revolutionary measure than the foundation of a monarchy, for it left the essential principle of the republic undisturbed. It was in reality a return to an idea which the conservative party had favourably entertained before the civil war; the creation of a new, unique office, entirely republican, known by the title of *princeps*, a term and idea wholly Latin in meaning, and wrongly translated by the word "prince"; in our language the connotation of this word is entirely different; to the Romans it meant "chief," "principal," and should be translated by "president." Octavianus was putting into practice the advice which Cicero had vainly proffered to Antony in the Senate of September 2, 44: *libertate esse parem cæteris, principem dignitate*—to be the first magistrate in a republic based upon the principle of equality among all the citizens. He agreed to accept an appointment for ten years as sole president of the Latin republic, with supreme military command and wide but constitutional powers, rather resembling those of the federal President in America than of an Asiatic monarch.

The approval  
of Horace.

When Octavianus had thus decided, Horace announced the fact in the second ode of his First Book, in which, to protect Rome and to end civil war, he invoked Apollo, the god of intellectual culture, Venus, the goddess of fertility, Mars, the god of war, and Mercury, the god of commercial and material welfare; he depicted Octavianus in the youthful form of Mercury, as the avenger of Cæsar, bestowing Cleopatra's treasure upon Italy:

Hic ames dici pater atque princeps.

The details of this arrangement were soon settled between



Octavianus and the leaders of the Senate; the compact was drawn up towards the end of the year 28, and was ratified in a solemn session of the Senate on January 13, 27.\* Octavianus, who was consul for the seventh time, rose in the Senate and declared that he resigned all the extraordinary powers which he had hitherto enjoyed and placed the government of the republic in the hands of the Senate and *comitia*. Thereupon, on the proposal of some orator unknown to us, the Senate conferred upon him, who was already consul, the proconsular government of Syria, Spain and Gaul for ten years.† On January 16 he was given the title of Augustus as a token of the gratitude felt by the Senate and the people; ‡ this was a term borrowed from religion, and was applied in the old ritual to a temple when duly consecrated; § it now lent both a religious and national character to the new magistracy of the *princeps*, which Pompey had vainly attempted to wield twenty-five years previously during the disturbances aroused by the death of Clodius. Thus Cicero's idea was triumphant; the republic had been saved and monarchy was not to make its triumphal entry into Rome; a century of change in manners, ideas and institutions was required to transform the essence of Italian political life.

Thus modern historians who persist in regarding this reform as a fiction intended to hide monarchical beneath republican forms are wholly mistaken; it seems equally erroneous to regard the reform of Augustus as a division of power between the Senate and the *princeps*. It was a reform intended to revive the unity of the Roman State, which, to the great detriment of Italy, had been almost overthrown by the triumvirate, where again there had been a division of power after the deposition of Lepidus. It was a reform which brought the whole empire under senatorial authority, and the Senate itself under the supervision of a restraining president and guardian of constitutional form; it was meant to re-establish not so much

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The title of Augustus.

Octavianus had no desire for monarchy.

\* On the question of this date cp. C. I. L. i. pp. 312 and 384.

† Dion. liii. 39; Mon. Anc. vi. 13.

‡ Mon. Anc. vi. 16.

§ Boissier, *La Religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, Paris, 1892, i. p. 73.

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the form as the essence of the republic, and to preserve as far as possible the government of the empire in the hands of the little Italian oligarchy under the supervision of the historical nobility. Thus the constitutional reform of 27 was, for the aristocracy, a brilliant revenge for Philippi, obtained without a struggle by the mere force of circumstances, and due not to the energy of the nobles who had survived the revolution, but to the glory and merits of their ancestors. The great triumphs of those ancestors had echoed through successive centuries, and their degenerate descendants or proscribed posterity had reaped the benefit. Once again Italy had crushed its old nobility and had then humbly begged the defeated party to govern the empire. This explanation would seem both simple and probable to any modern historian who could abandon the preconceived opinion which both exaggerates and diminishes the political reforms of the year 27; diminishes, because it reduces these reforms to a comedy played by the victor and the senators, in order to delude the public; exaggerates, because it regards the reforms as concluding the era of republican government and marking the commencement of the Roman monarchy. Octavianus had no intention of deceiving his contemporaries, nor did he imagine that the echoes of this revolution would reach even our own times. He was simply attempting to solve the difficulties of the moment by a constitutional reform which he considered as likely to meet a temporary need, and as settling nothing except for the ten years of his proconsulship; then, if the situation changed, his attitude and his plans would change also. He had, in fact, reserved to himself the power of resigning this presidency before the end of the ten years if he thought his resignation would not be detrimental to the republic.\*

The meaning  
of the reforms.

It is therefore not surprising that two and a half years after the battle of Actium Cæsar's son should have attempted thus to satisfy the aspirations and republican feeling of the middle and upper classes in Italy. We may be unwilling to consider the most important point, the great political and economic interests which urged Italy as a whole to preserve the profitable

\* Cp. Dion, liii. 13.



monopoly of government ; but even so we should remember that the whole course of ancient history proves the tenacity and depth of republican ideas and traditions in the little Greek or Italian republics, and the difficulty of abolishing their liberties, even when they were nothing more than an empty show. The many little Greek republics, notwithstanding the frequent calamities which overwhelmed them, were only crushed by the brutal force of a foreign conqueror. The Roman republic, far from falling beneath the yoke of foreign monarchs, had destroyed every monarchy founded by Alexander. Thus it is inconceivable that a system of government which had enjoyed such vast successes should be abolished at any moment by the act of one man or of a small party. We should remember that the republicanism of ancient Rome, which classical learning has transmitted to our own times, is still powerful ; it was the mainspring of the French Revolution, the revolution of 1848, and the Liberal movement of the nineteenth century ; it again is the mainspring of the struggles and confusions which now shake the vast empire of Russia. It is incredible that such republicanism should have been extinct in the days of Cæsar and Augustus, when the great republican empire was still in existence. The persistency of republican tradition was, indeed, the inevitable outcome of the great diplomatic and military triumphs which Rome had won during the last two centuries of republican life, from the battle of Cannæ to the capture of Alexandria. It is not surprising that Augustus, exhausted and undecided, remembering the discreditable scandals of the triumvirate, should have regarded the republican principle as inviolable, seeing that modern Europe owes much of its destiny to its triumphs ; it was Roman republicanism which inspired Europe to fight for her great ideals of liberty, without which European history would have been a counterpart of Oriental history, a monotonous succession of despotisms, rising one upon the ruins of another.

Thus these peaceful senatorial sessions concluded a revolution begun with the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus a hundred and six years previously, and thus imperceptibly and unnoticed a new epoch began in the history of the world. At this solemn

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The beginning  
of a new  
epoch.



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moment the appalling turmoils of the last century sank to rest. The first blood had been shed on Roman soil in 132 by the consul Opimius and the nobles who were alarmed by the agrarian agitation of the youthful Gracchus, and the subsequent slaughter had stained every province of the empire with blood. In this confusion had been whelmed the most illustrious families of Rome, countless sovereigns, states great and small, the flower of Italy, many an Asiatic dynasty and the lowest barbarians of continental Europe. Now it seemed that the work of slaughter was at an end; men gathered confidence, and Italy, with remorse, hope and joy, looked forward to a future of peace and glory, and resolved to deserve these blessings by the cultivation of virtues unduly neglected. A strange ferment of different aspirations agitated the nation, and found expression in the works of its two greatest poets. Virgil, who had finished the *Georgics*, resumed the plan which he had conceived at the outset of his literary career and began the composition of a great national poem in the style of Ennius, which was modified by his own refined art and the study of Greek masterpieces. Horace, who was rather a great stylist and critic than a lyric poet, had hitherto resisted the seductions of the nationalist movement, the inconsistencies of which he plainly saw. In the second book of his *Satires* he began to glorify the new system like every one else, but soon broke off as though in self-mockery. In his second *Epode*, for instance, he had depicted the usurer Alfius, who loudly praises country life, but hastens to oppress his debtors. In the seventh *Satire* of the second book he was apparently pleased to destroy the effect of the preceding *Satires* by the mouth of one of his slaves, who mocks at the festival of the *Saturnalia*. "You boast of ancient times, but if you were to live in them, great would be your despair. . . . You praise the country, but hasten to return from it to the town. . . . You say that invitations and social functions weary you, and if you have to go to dinner with Mæcenas great is the outcry and vexation. Quick, bring the oil for perfume; hasten, sluggards; what are you about?" But even Horace was eventually carried away by the stream, and composed a series of heroic and civic odes in a variety of Greek metres hitherto



unemployed in Latin ; in these he expressed the new spirit with which Italy was infused. In one he celebrated the splendour of ancient times, preached the necessity of moral reform and proclaimed the hopes of fresh military exploits and glory ; in another he urged the claims of religion upon the Romans ; again, he warned them that the return of peace was dependent upon purity of manners and family life ; he blamed the frivolous and worldly education of women, which led so many noble matrons in poverty to sell themselves to rich merchants ; he recalled the hard training to which the youth of an earlier generation was subjected, and regretted the deterioration of his own time ;

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*Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit  
Nos nequiores, mox daturos  
Progeniem vitiosiore.*

Though Roman literature was thus enriched by fine patriotic poetry, the supreme power remained in the hands of a small and decadent oligarchy composed of obscure nobodies and survivors of the great Roman aristocracy, whose chief desire was to enjoy their splendour undisturbed ; with this object they were ready to give full power and honour to their leader, the grandson of the usurer of Velletri, an old man at the age of thirty-six, weak in character and broken in health, who refused the empire of the world, the power of Rome and of Alexander which fortune had placed in his hands. The ultimate victor in one of the fiercest struggles known to history, in which many a great general had perished, was the most unwarlike character in Roman history ; the command of the armies which had conquered the vastest empire which the world had ever seen devolved upon a valetudinarian, who dared not go bareheaded in the sun, would not mount a horse for fear of fatigue and was carried to the battlefield in a litter.\* But beneath these apparent inconsistencies lay the force of inexorable necessity. As invariably happens, the revolution party had wearied of revolution and became conservatives when the time arrived for the peaceful enjoyment of the

Characteristics  
of the new  
government.

\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 82 and 83.

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booty divided during the civil wars. It has been repeatedly stated that Augustus was Cæsar's heir, that he continued his policy and built upon the foundations Cæsar had laid. The statement is wholly arbitrary and unconfirmed by facts. From the restoration of the year 27, Augustus spent forty-one years in uninterrupted effort to realise the programme of political and social regeneration developed by Cicero in the *De Officiis*. His conservative policy was the very antithesis of Cæsar's; he restrained luxury, restored the credit of religion and of the traditional morality; he purified the administration as far as possible by the removal of foreigners and upstarts, while his influence upon the national life and religion was opposed to cosmopolitanism and eastern influence, in favour of pure nationalism. He diminished unproductive expenditure upon outward luxury, and used the accumulated wealth for the furtherance of material, political and moral progress. Finally, he strove to revive the conservative aristocracy, exclusively Roman by nature, which Cæsar had fiercely opposed and which he had himself overthrown. Even in the year 28 Octavianus had begun to restore by gifts the fortunes of senatorial families reduced to poverty and had given them some of the splendour and power which they had lost, that they might support him in his task of governing the republic.\*

The task of  
reconstruction.

The revolution was definitely at an end. A great conservative reaction was spreading over the country. It was the triumph of Cicero and the defeat of Cæsar, whose son was to continue his name but not his deeds. Octavianus had brought final destruction upon the Roman aristocracy, had trampled it beneath his feet and had exterminated it by his proscriptions at the battle of Philippi and in the waters of Sicily. He had signed Cicero's death-warrant, and he was now working to restore what he had pulled down. Such changes are often imposed upon politicians by the vicissitudes of history. But Augustus was soon to perceive that if the balance of good and evil is almost everywhere equivalent, there is one case where it is not so, and which accordingly justifies a pessimistic view of life; though it is easy to destroy, it is difficult to build. The forest which a

\* Dion, liii. 2.



century has produced may be burnt to ashes in a day; the man upon whose upbringing twenty years have been spent may be destroyed in a moment. By proscription and summary justice it had been easy to massacre, to impoverish and to scatter the remnants of the old nobility; but Augustus now required them to share the task of governing the vast empire, and it would be difficult to give the survivors the wealth, the confidence, the strength and the patriotism necessary for this purpose. In the magnificence of Augustus there was this inconsistency, the slow progress of which was to be the source of infinite evils. The second half of his life, which now begins, was filled with the disillusionment, the bitterness, and the unprofitable toil of this restoration, which could never be more than half successful; by these disappointments he paid most tragically for his unexampled good fortune and made some slight expiation for the bloodshed and the crimes which had stained his youth.

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Among the reforms which were passed upon the restoration of the republic, two had a special importance as facilitating the organisation of an aristocratic government. One of these innovations lowered the age limit for magistrates and allowed young men to begin their political career in earlier years.\* The other reform fixed salaries for every governor or magistrate in proportion to their responsibilities.† These reforms were necessary. Aristocratic families had so diminished in number that it was impossible to find men of noble birth for every

The measures  
of reform.

\* No text definitely states this fact, but it may be gathered from Dion, who says (liii. 28) that in the year 24 B.C. Tiberius was authorised by the Senate to become a candidate for office five years before the legal age, and was appointed quæstor immediately. In the year 24 Tiberius was eighteen; as he sought the quæstorship five years before the legal time, this latter must have been the age of twenty-three. It is well known that much greater age was necessary in Cicero's time. Moreover, we shall see in later chapters that consuls aged thirty, thirty-two, and thirty-five are numerous under Augustus. Hence at some time or other there must have been a reform of the *leges annales* in force at Cæsar's time which provided that candidates for the consulship should be between forty and fifty years of age. I have assumed that this great constitutional reform was now initiated; it is possible, however, that the innovation was made under the triumvirate to allow the triumvirs to confer magistracies upon any one they pleased, without reference to class or age.

† Dion, liii. 15.

27 B.C. important office unless the younger members were utilised, as, indeed, was done during the great epoch of aristocratic government. Probably there was also a hope that youthful magistrates would revive the exhausted power of the republic. In view, moreover, of the poverty of many noble families, few would have been able, even had they been willing, to undertake the responsibility of posts which often necessitated much expense, unless some remuneration were attached. Of these two necessary reforms, one represented a return to the traditions of the oligarchic republic, but the other contradicted the principle of unpaid offices, a principle of vital importance to that aristocratic constitution of which the revival was desired; these two reforms in reality contributed to destroy the essential principle of the old Roman government. When the republican magistrate received pay, he gradually became a governmental official, and the attempt to rejuvenate the republic gradually created a privileged class. This change, however, was much slower and more complicated than is usually supposed. We shall follow its course in the succeeding volumes, and, leaving the stormy history of war and revolution, shall study the peaceful expansion of the empire and the premonitory symptoms of that disease which was to cause its death.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE POSITION OF AUGUSTUS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

Italian illusions and aspirations—Augustus and the great empire—Apparent agreement between Augustus and Italy—The eastern empire and public opinion—The eastern policy and the ideas of Augustus—The results of the first misunderstanding—Further differences between the opinions of Augustus and of the public—The reform of morality—*Nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus*—Improvement of the imperial finances—New mines and fresh taxation—The work of Augustus—The State credit—The new government at Rome—The new government and the aristocracy—The first journey of Augustus ; his pretexts and his reasons—The *præfectus urbi*—The viceroy of Egypt—First difficulties in Egypt—Departure of Augustus.

MEN breathed freely once more. The last storm-clouds disappeared from the horizon and an open sky gave promise of peace and happiness. The horrors of revolution were at an end ; the tyranny of the triumvirs, military anarchy and crushing taxation had ceased for ever. The Senate resumed its regular sessions ; the consuls, prætors, ædiles and quæstors held office as of old ; provincial governors, appointed by choice or lot from ex-consuls and ex-prætors, entered upon their duties. After years of discord, hatred and massacre, Italy was at length united at least in admiration for Augustus and for the traditions of ancient Rome. Renewed hopes.

The battle of Actium, the fall of Antony, the story of Cleopatra, the conquest of Egypt, the re-establishment of the republic and the strange and almost incredible events of recent years had turned the general attention to the remote origins of the national history and the insignificant beginning of the great empire. Tradition became fashionable and the antiquity The return to tradition.

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of an institution was sufficient to secure respect for it. Deep was the general regret for the great aristocracy which had governed the empire until the war against Perseus. Private manners, family life, constitutional and military organisation, and the citizens individually were thought to have undergone a gradual deterioration from age to age; even the classical writers, Livius Andronicus, Pacuvius, Ennius, Plautus and Terence were preferred to the more exuberant vitality of the writers during Cæsar's generation. In the preceding year the Senate had given orders that the temples of Rome should be repaired before the Italian roads, though the state of the latter was extremely bad, and this order of precedence did but express the universal sentiment. It was generally believed that the Roman greatness had been acquired before she had become the tavern or the brothel of the world; then she had been a sacred town where innumerable gods, invisible but omnipresent, had guarded for centuries her physical and moral well-being, the chastity of her families and the discipline of her armies, the honesty of her citizens and of her courts, her civic peace and her military success. Ties essentially religious had for centuries bound husband to wife, sons to father, patron to client, soldier to general, citizen to magistrate and magistrate to the republic. It was thus of vital importance to restore the army, the family life and the social customs of an earlier generation, and so to re-establish that God-fearing republic which had conquered the world by arms and by prayer. It was a work of infinite and undoubted difficulty, but the majority regarded the task as easy and success as certain, now that Augustus was at the head of the empire with the power of *princeps*. His enthusiastic admirers throughout Italy ascribed their immediate benefits entirely to him and set on him their greatest hopes for the future. He it was who had penetrated the dark and criminal designs of Antony and Cleopatra as they silently prepared the chains of disgraceful slavery for Rome. He it was who had poured the wealth of the Ptolemies into Italy, had earned the gratitude of the veterans who were slowly entering into possession of their promised lands, the gratitude of the townships who had been paid in full for the lands they had lost, and the



gratitude of the State creditors who had at length received their long-expected reimbursements. The arts and crafts, commerce and agriculture had languished for want of capital, but were now reviving beneath the refreshing shower of Egyptian gold and silver, and this was the work of Augustus. Finally, to Augustus alone was due the fact that the recollections of the civil war were gradually passing from men's memories. Thus it was impossible not to place every confidence in the author of such high achievements, and this favourite of fortune, triumphant by the sport of chance, became the object of an admiration unparalleled in Roman history. It was universally believed that Augustus would restore peace and prosperity throughout the empire, would re-establish religion in the temple and justice in the court, would check immorality and avenge the Parthian defeats of Crassus and Antony. In certain cases enthusiasm for Augustus passed the limits of reason; a senator was seen to run distractedly through the streets of Rome, exhorting every one he met to consecrate himself to Augustus according to Spanish custom—in other words, to promise not to survive him.\*

Augustus' success had been complete; it also became legendary, and, as usual in the case of every successful man or nation, the witnesses of his triumph magnified his prowess and extolled him to the skies. The bloodthirsty triumvir of the proscriptions, the incompetent general of Philippi, the cowardly admiral of Scilla, the despised grandson of the usurer of Velletri, was now regarded by his contemporaries as the long-expected saviour who would heal the many misfortunes of his country. Vague and mystical aspirations towards a happier and a purer age and a universal regeneration had been widely current during the revolution, and had prepared men's minds to welcome this illusion with wild enthusiasm. In the darkest days of the civil war the *haruspices* had announced at Rome, according to an obscure Etruscan doctrine, the commencement of the tenth century, and ten centuries were

Current  
mysticism.

\* Dion, liii. 20.

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the term of a nation's life.\* The Sibylline oracles, collected and enounced by the gentle Virgil in his popular fourth Eclogue, had announced the approaching reign of Apollo and had brought this Etruscan doctrine into connection with the old Italian legend of the fourth age of the world.† Amid the storms of revolution the Pythagorean philosophy had been deeply studied at Rome, and Varro ‡ had disseminated the doctrine which taught that men's souls returned periodically from the Elysian fields to re-enter life upon the earth.§ With this philosophy another doctrine had been incorporated, also preached by Varro, which taught that after every four hundred and fifty years soul and body came together once more and the world returned to its former state.|| For the last thirty years men had lived in dim expectation of some glorious event which would solve all troubles ; existing ideas upon this subject were confused to the point of absurdity, and precisely for this reason everybody was able to find the fulfilment of his desires in the success of Augustus. A general conviction arose that he was the long-expected figure called, as Virgil will soon express it, *condere aurea sæcula*, to realise all the vague hopes which then possessed men's minds.

Augustus and  
the empire.

One citizen of the empire, however, declined to believe the legend, mistrusted and, indeed, almost feared it, and this man was Augustus himself. For fifty years historians have incessantly repeated that Augustus had secretly worked with unswerving persistency throughout his life to concentrate this power in his own hands, like Cæsar, and to use the old republican forms to which his contemporaries were accustomed, as a vesture for the new monarchy which he was secretly and powerfully fashioning. The legend is ridiculous, and has secured credence hitherto for the reason that no one has studied in full detail the work and the age of the man who is

\* *Frag. Hist. Rom.* (Peter), p. 254 ; Augustus, iv. 5.

† Servius, *ad Virg. Ecl.* iv. 4.

‡ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 6.

§ Virgil will be found repeating this theory in the *Æneid*, vi. 724 ff. Cp. Boissier, *La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, i. Paris, 1892, p. 274 ff.

|| Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, xxii. 28.



often improperly styled the first Roman emperor. After the lapse of twenty centuries, and influenced by his knowledge of subsequent events, it is difficult for a historian to reconstruct the situation as contemporaries saw it; this one difficulty has proved insurmountable to the majority of historians, with the result that Augustus and his strange government have been entirely misunderstood. Yet it should not be impossible to understand why Augustus was intimidated by the unique position which fortune seemed to have granted him. Enthusiasts are often dazzled by success and are led to believe the prevailing opinion of their extraordinary powers; but here we have an intellectual egoist without vanity or ambition, a hypochondriac, anxious to avoid sudden excitement, a man old at the age of thirty-six, a cold, sagacious and careful calculator, incapable of self-delusion. He was well aware that the essential point of the legend, the foundation of his greatness, the causes of the general admiration for himself, rested upon a vast misunderstanding; he knew that honours, distinctions, constitutional and unconstitutional powers were showered upon him because the childish and invincible confidence of the multitude expected miracles of him which he had not the smallest intention of attempting to perform, because he knew them to be impossible.

Of these miracles the first was the conquest of Persia. This was the greatest difficulty which the revolution bequeathed to Augustus as a consequence of the profound upheaval of governmental order in the east. The battle of Actium had terrified Italy by a sudden revelation, plain even to the most superficial mind, and dawning upon far-sighted men immediately after Philippi; it was clear that the position of Italy in the midst of the barbarous, poverty-stricken and uncertain provinces of the west was most unsatisfactory; Italy had been so shattered by civil war, her resources and her population had been so diminished, that she could no longer dominate the eastern half of the empire, which had grown enormously during the last fifty years by Lucullus' conquest of Pontus, Pompey's conquest of Syria and the recent conquest of Egypt by Augustus. When Antony took the east for himself in alliance with Egypt

The eastern problem.



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and left Octavianus with the west, he had forced Italy to spend ten years in wasteful inaction and helplessly to behold the rapid dissolution of her political and economic system, while he himself had been able to begin vast enterprises and attempt the conquest of the world upon the lines laid down by Alexander. Antony and Cleopatra had thus suddenly revealed to Italy that the vast eastern empire, gained by two centuries of conquest, might be wrested from her grasp in a day with no great difficulty ; they had shown that in any case the very extent of that empire, its geographical situation, its wealth and its long-standing civilisation tended to overshadow the greater barbarism and poverty of the western empire, and therefore to dominate Italy herself, situated as she was upon the frontier of the empire and on the threshold of barbarian Europe. The legend of Cleopatra's wish to rule from the Capitol was merely a popular view of the eastern problem. Hence had originated the violent outburst of national feeling which had overthrown Antony after the battle of Actium and obliged Augustus to conquer Egypt and destroy the dynasty of the Ptolemies, as a striking act of vengeance for the humiliations that the east had inflicted upon Rome during the civil war. Hence, too, had originated the constant rumours concerning the possible transference of the capital to the east, the keen anxiety of patriotic Romans, and the warnings of Horace, who uses Juno in the third ode of his third book to symbolise the struggle between the east and Rome in the legend of the Trojan war. Hence, again, originated the vastly popular idea of revenge upon the Parthians. Roman patriotism was not satisfied by the conquest of Egypt. Intoxicated by the popular legendary view of Actium, which represented the late war as a great triumph for Rome, deceived by the legendary reputation of Augustus for success in the most difficult enterprises, Italy was anxious to continue a course of reprisals and vengeance in the east, to complete the conquest of Persia, which would re-establish Roman prestige throughout Asia, and provide the great resources required for the reorganisation of the imperial exchequer. The voices of poets continually announced the departure of legions for distant conquests, even for that



of India, and through them Italy expressed its interest in the great project of Cæsar and Antony.\* 27 B.C.

Unfortunately it was too late; such, at any rate, was the opinion of Augustus. He fully recognised the necessity of strengthening the tottering Roman power in the east, but not by means of the reprisals and theatrical wars which Italy desired. He knew the secret of Actium; he had not ventured to pose as the champion of Italian nationalism until Antony's incredible blundering had proved the ruin of his cause; his ultimate victory in the last war had been won without striking a blow. Thus the events of which he had been a part in recent years had brought him to a conviction which alone can explain the foreign policy of his first ten years as *princeps*; he considered that Rome had been so exhausted by civil war that even with the support of Italy and the western provinces she could not continue in the east the brutal and arbitrary policy with which her energetic foresight had subdued the eastern states, from Pontus to Egypt. Rome was also growing old, and would be helpless against a new eastern coalition as attempted by Cleopatra, if such a combination were able to avoid Antony's mistakes.

Augustus' eastern policy.

If Antony had followed Cleopatra's advice and after the foundation of the new empire had refrained from carrying the war with Octavianus into Europe, and had waited for Rome to attack the east in the hope of recovering her lost provinces, Octavianus would have been powerless. An eastern war with this new and formidable empire would have been a hopeless enterprise. Rome was thus obliged to admit her

The administration of Egypt.

\* Cf. Horace, *Odes*, I. ii. 22, I. ii. 49, I. xii. 53, I. xxix. 4, III. ii. 3, III. v. 4, III. viii. 19; Propertius, II. vii. 13 (if we accept the correction *Parthis . . . triumphis*), III. i. 13 ff., IV. i. 15 ff., IV. 4, V. iii. 7. These passages show us that at this period every one was persuaded that Augustus proposed to make a great expedition in the distant east, following the example of Crassus, Cæsar and Antony; further confirmation is the fact that when Augustus started for Spain towards the end of the year he left a general impression that he proposed to conquer Britain and would then attack Persia. This general impression so largely contributed to his popularity that Augustus, utterly averse to the enterprise as he was, would not venture to deny current rumours on the subject, and allowed them to circulate until he could secure some diplomatic agreement.



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weakness in the east, and, like every state and party in its decadence, to hide her impotence beneath a veil of kindness and generosity, and to begin a more humane treatment of those provinces which she could no longer dominate by brute force.\* The organisation of Egypt was certainly devised and proposed by Augustus; though historians did not recognise the fact, it was a true revolutionary innovation, introduced to the republic by civil war and finally sanctioned by the restoration of the years 28 and 27; this organisation was the first practical effort of the new oriental policy. For the first time in Roman history the new conquest had not been placed under a vassal dynasty, lest some new Cleopatra should arise; nor, again, had it been declared a Roman province, as there was no certainty that Egypt would submit to proconsular government. The legitimate monarchy, with its long-standing prestige, its constant and intricate work of corruption and repression, had been unequal to the task of maintaining order during the last fifty years, and the country had been constantly disturbed by popular risings, palace conspiracies and civil wars. It was not to be expected that an obscure senator reappointed haphazard every year would prove equal to the task of government with three legions, one of which would be scarcely adequate for the maintenance of order in Alexandria.† Roman government was unpopular and discredited throughout the east, and especially in Egypt. Augustus, following the policy of Antony, had therefore conceived the idea of raising in Egypt a shadowy semblance of a dynasty to conceal the republican representative of Rome.‡ He proposed to govern Egypt by means of a double-faced magistracy; the republican and Latin countenance would be turned to Italy and the oriental and monarchical counte-

\* The journey of Augustus to Asia in the year 21-20, to which we shall refer later, will show that this was the leading idea of his oriental policy.

† Strabo, XVII. i. 12 (797).

‡ Tacitus, *Hist.* i. 11, distinctly states in an important passage that this was the object of the remarkable organisation of Egypt: *equites romani obtinent loco regum: ita visum expedire, provinciâ aditu difficilem, annonæ fecundam, superstitione ac lascivia discordem et mobilem, insciam legum, ignaram magistratuum, domi retinere.* Cp. Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, Paris, 1904, ii. p. 351.



nance to Egypt, following the precedent of Antony's attempt. Augustus and the *præfectus Ægypti* appointed by him arranged to play their parts in accordance with this principle ; Augustus, who was merely the first citizen of the republic in Italy, would be the successor of the Ptolemies and the new king of Egypt in the eyes of the Egyptians during the ten years of his principate ; his absence from Alexandria would be explained by the necessity of governing a vaster empire from Rome ; the local government of Egypt would thus be administered by the *præfectus*, who would be to the Egyptians a kind of viceroy, while the Italians would regard him as the traditional magistrate sent out from Rome to govern the towns subjected during the first centuries of the conquest of Italy. The man who could not venture to declare Egypt a Roman province could not attempt the conquest of Persia after the two great failures of Crassus and Antony. Further, more was wanted for the conquest of Persia than the magnificent odes of Horace—according to Cæsar's calculations, at least sixteen legions and enormous sums of money. But the army was now reduced to twenty-three legions, which were scarcely sufficient to defend the empire ; hence to send sixteen to the country which had seen the death of Crassus was out of the question.

It was thus a kind of contagious delusion which presented Augustus to Italy as the realisation of the national hopes. The harmony between the nation and the first magistrate of the republic was rather apparent than real, and upon such capital questions as the eastern policy disagreement was inevitable. Italy attempted to drive Augustus upon the road which Crassus and Antony had followed, while Augustus wished to leave Persia to the poets, who might conquer it in verse as often as they pleased. This want of agreement alone is enough to prove that the constitutional moderation of Augustus was something more than a "political comedy." From the time of Crassus the conquest of Persia had been the justification of every *coup d'état*, whether intended or realised ; by this conquest Cæsar had hoped to justify his dictatorship and Antony his triumvirate. On the other hand, Augustus,

Constitutional  
position of  
Augustus.



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unwilling to hazard his power in the distant east for the trophies promised by Cæsar and Antony, proposed as a matter of prudence and necessity, and not as a means of mystification or from republican altruism, to continue his consulship at Rome and his proconsulship in the three provinces upon the simple methods of constitutional procedure ; he was prepared to hide as far as possible the serious innovation introduced by the reforms of 28 and 27, namely, his joint tenure of these consular and proconsular powers, together with the *præfectura Ægypti*. He had therefore expressly refused any further honours after January 16, and had attempted to calm the fanaticism of his admirers ; \* he strove to demonstrate by every means in his power that he wished to govern through the Senate ; † he attempted to reduce the popular ideas of his personality and capacity within reasonable limits, and to persuade his fellow citizens that he was merely a senator and a Roman magistrate. These are the acts which have been regarded as sheer pretence by the historians of the last fifty years, who, however, should consider that Augustus probably knew more of Rome and of Italy in his own day than they can possibly know in ours. At any rate, Augustus was aware that imperial pride and republican jealousy were two sentiments struggling within the nation ; that if he satisfied one feeling the other would be wounded, though both could not be outraged simultaneously. The conqueror of Persia might perhaps have overthrown the republic without excessive risk, but Augustus had no inclination for such an attempt.

Further  
differences  
between public  
opinion and  
the views of  
Augustus.

The misunderstanding, however, between Augustus and Italy was not confined to this question. Numberless benefits were constantly demanded from him which the dictatorship itself could not have given to the republic. Domestic peace and order at Rome and in Italy and the harmonious working of the new constitution were among these desires. It seemed natural to every one that the new magistrate at the head of the republic should restrain all those revolutionary forces which had shattered the constitution during the preceding century, and oblige the aristocracy and equestrian order, who

\* Dion, liii. 20.

† Dion, liii. 21.



had resumed their old privileges, to perform their functions with due zeal ; in short, it was expected that the new *princeps* would secure the regular working of every constitutional organ, the *comitia*, the Senate, the magistracies and the courts. Augustus, however, had no means to compel such action, and was unable to discover any. At Rome and in Italy he could exert nothing more than his consular authority. This office had been established in a simpler age, when responsibility was far less, and its authority was now inadequate to cope with the necessities of the moment ; Augustus could not even raise a police force to check the turbulence of the lower classes in the capital. In his anxiety to act as a strictly constitutional consul he had sent away from Rome the prætorian cohorts by which, as proconsul, he could be escorted when he took the command of the army ; he had resolved never to call soldiers into Rome or to repeat the constant and unhappy acts of the triumvirate in this respect. Thus to maintain order in a cosmopolitan town, full of poverty-stricken wretches and criminals, habitually turbulent and riotous, his only weapon was his prestige as the saviour of Rome, the conqueror of Cleopatra and the universal peacemaker. If his task at Rome was thus difficult, much greater was the difficulty of securing peace and order throughout the State and the smooth working of the constitutional machine. He had also to consider another aspiration of earlier date which the conclusion of the civil war had revived in every class—the reform of morality. For more than a century some such action had been demanded by every party in turn ; attempts had been made for its accomplishment, sometimes in sincerity, at other times under compulsion or by pretence ; it had been proposed, adjourned, brought forward afresh, and now seemed to be the one remedy for the moral crisis through which the State was passing and the necessary completion of the aristocratic restoration. Everybody realised that the re-establishment of the republic also necessitated a revival of the senatorial nobility and of an order of knights willing to use their wealth for the public benefit and not anxious to squander it in insensate luxury or shameful orgies, ready to set an example of every virtue likely to safeguard an

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empire acquired by conquest, purity of family life, civic unselfishness, military valour, moral austerity, zeal and resolution. Unless the aristocracy were regenerated by some such moral reform, it was not likely to produce the officers and generals who could lead victorious legions to the heart of Persia, nor were the institutions of the republic likely to prove workable. Horace had already pointed to the purity of family life in old-time Rome as the source of her power.\* He had cried aloud to Italy that the Parthians would only be conquered when the rising generation submitted to a new and sterner course of education,† and he now exclaimed,

Quid leges sine moribus  
Vanæ proficiunt? . . . ‡

The term *leges* here implies the re-establishment of order, the restoration of the republic. The poet means to say that the restoration of the republic is useless unless the corruption of its manners be amended, and that otherwise a sound constitution would only produce bad results.§ Hence it is imperatively necessary to eradicate the ardent desire for wealth, which is the origin of most evils.

Campestres melius Scythæ,  
Quorum plaustra vagas rite trahunt domos,  
Vivunt et rigidi Getæ,  
Inmetata quibus jugera liberas  
Fruges et Cererem ferunt. . . .||

Horace, however, does not believe that men are capable of reforming themselves or of surrendering to rational and wise advice; reliance must therefore be set upon the force of law.

\* *Odes*, III. vi. 17 ff.

† *Odes*, III. ii. 1 ff.

‡ *Odes*, III. xxiv. 35-36.

§ Horace does not mean, as might be thought, that laws are useless to reform morality; if the lines had this meaning they would contradict the preceding lines, in which the poet demands laws and punishments as a check upon vice (v. 28-29; . . . *indomitam audeat refrenare licentiam*; v. 33: *Si non supplicio culpa reciditur*). Horace is so firmly convinced of the value of law for moral reform that the whole of the ode is a call for such legislation; at the same time he asserts that the best political and social laws are useless if morals are corrupt; the reformation of morals must therefore be the first task, and special laws must be made for the purpose.

|| *Odes*, III. xxiv. 9 ff.



O quisquis volet impias  
 Cædes et rabiem tollere civicam,  
 Si quæret Pater Urbium  
 Subscribi statuis, indomitam audeat  
 Refrenare licentiam,  
 Clarus postgenitis ; quatenus, heu nefas !  
 Virtutem incolumem odimus,  
 Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.  
 Quid tristes querimoniae,  
 Si non supplicio culpa reciditur. . . . \*

The ideas of Horace, as expressed in these lines, were repeated throughout Italy under different forms ; Augustus was urged to pass laws against luxury, immorality and celibacy, and to re-establish the traditional supervision of private morality, which had long been entrusted to the censors by the aristocracy.† But theory on this subject was easier than practice. Augustus was himself fully inclined to satisfy the new puritans. As we should now say, he was a thorough traditional conservative by character and training ; he preferred simplicity and economy to luxury and extravagance ; he was an admirer of Cicero, brought up in a middle-class family, and had lived among that section of the Roman aristocracy where ancient traditions had been best preserved. To one of these families his wife, Livia, also belonged, and her influence over him was always very great. Augustus, however, like every intelligent man of his time, was profoundly acquainted with the moral degeneration of the upper classes, especially of that which might be called, in the phrase of a modern writer,‡ the political class ; it was impossible for him to believe in the feasibility of any radical moral reformation. Through the mouth of Horace the partisans of the good old time demanded severe measures and laws against corruption ; at the same time another poet, Propertius, broke out into a cry of joy at the abolition, with other measures passed during the civil war, of a law promulgated by the triumvirs at some date unknown to us, and intended to oblige citizens to marry.

\* *Odes*, III. xxiv. 25 ff.

† In the year 22 two censors were appointed to satisfy public opinion (Dion, liv. 2), the first appointments of the kind for a long period, but, as we shall see, this attempt to revive the censorship proved unsuccessful (Velleius Paterculus, ii. 95).

‡ Gaetano Mosca.

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Gavisa es certe sublatam, Cynthia, legem,  
Qua quondam edicta, flemus uterque diu. . . \*

The remedy  
as intolerable  
as the disease.

While the universal imagination dwelt upon Roman victories over the Parthians, this poet was making an unqualified avowal of his civic egoism to his lady :

Unde mihi Parthis natos præbere triumphis ?  
Nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit.†

The admission brought him no reproaches either from the aristocracy, who admired him, or from Mæcenas, his patron. While Horace confined himself to patriotic and religious poetry, Propertius and Tibullus, who enjoyed no less favour among the aristocracy, attained equal success in the field of erotic poetry ; this branch of composition may, under certain conditions, become a disintegrating influence, especially in a society based upon close family organisation. Finally, about this time another writer, Livy, founded the scheme of his great Roman history upon the traditional idea of the State and

\* Propertius, II. vi. 1 ff. Jörs (*Die Ehegesetze des Augustus*, Marburg, 1894, p. 5 ff.) seems to be right in his assertion that this passage refers to this time, but I think he is wrong in supposing from a passage in Tacitus (*Ann.* iii. 28) that Augustus passed the law upon marriage in the year 28 B.C. The terms employed by Tacitus, *acriora ex eo vincla*, are too vague ; they merely state that on his sixth consulship Augustus took the moral question in hand, but they make no allusion to a law. Moreover, Propertius says that the law *quondam edicta* had been *sublata*. Is it possible that Augustus passed the law in the year 28, which was immediately repealed ? The repeal of a law was a matter of some importance at Rome ; on the conclusion of the civil wars Augustus showed much prudence and caution in proposing laws, but resolutely maintained those that had been passed ; if he had passed and then repealed a law within a few months there must have been a serious reason for his action, of which we should certainly have heard something. It is more likely that Propertius alludes to some arrangement made by Augustus towards the close of the triumvirate, which was repealed in 28, with all the triumvirate measures, which were unconstitutional, or, in other words, had not been passed by the *comitia*. Propertius would then be correctly speaking of a *lex* which was *quondam edicta* by the triumvir in virtue of his then existing power, and was afterwards *sublata* by the general act of reparation. If a measure under the triumvirate is in question we can understand why no evidence of it remains ; doubtless many such measures were taken in the attempt to stop social dissolution, but no one heeded them.

† Propertius, II. vi. 13.



of Roman morality ; it was an idea then fashionable, but Livy did not believe that there was any prospect of its survival in the struggle with the invincible force of corruption then obvious upon every side. He affirms that he buried himself in the study of the past to forget the misfortunes of his own age and to distract his view from the appalling confusion of contrary desires, aspirations and interests which made "the evils of the moment as intolerable as the remedies necessary for their cure. *Nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus.*" This phrase is an excellent definition of the strange moral and social condition of the time ; it throws so clear a light on the policy of Augustus for the first ten years of his principate that I am inclined to consider it as the outcome of long discussion between Augustus and his friends upon the condition of Italy rather than as a personal reflection of the author himself. At such discussions Livy may have been present from time to time.

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Augustus therefore had no intention of attempting the conquest of Persia ; he was equally unwilling to undertake the difficult task of reforming morality by enforcing a return to the old simplicity of life. On this point again Italy and her hero were in apparent agreement, though their real intentions were wholly divergent. During the first moments of calm which followed the civil war the most serious preoccupation of Augustus was certainly not revenge upon the Parthians or moral reformation. He wished to devote his first care to the more urgent task of financial reorganisation ; he realised with perfect truth that this work was a necessary preliminary to any other reform.\* It was obvious that no government

Financial  
reorganisa-  
tion.

\* The most important of Augustus' measures during these early years can only be explained upon the hypothesis that the task of financial reorganisation occupied his first attention. He made an expedition into the country of the Asturians and Cantabrians, to the remotest quarters of Spain ; the independence of these peoples was of no political importance, and he was surrounded by difficulties on every side. But the enterprise was due to the fact that these regions possessed very valuable gold-mines, as we are informed by Florus, IV. xii. 60 (ii. 33), and Pliny, XXXIII. iv. 78. This theory is confirmed by the fact that Augustus now attempted to secure the submission of the Salassi, who occupied the valley thought to contain the richest gold-mines in Italy. It is true that this enterprise has been other-



27 B.C. could undertake war or reorganise public departments until it was assured of an adequate and constant revenue, and until some remedy had been found for the disquieting scarcity of current coin. Notwithstanding the conclusion of the civil wars, the financial situation of the empire was extremely bad; the treasuries of the State, the temples and the towns were empty; the enormous sums which had been confiscated during the revolution and even the treasures of Cleopatra seem to have disappeared, for money even in private circulation was extremely scarce, and successful plunderers carefully hid what they had secured lest they should be despoiled in their turn. The financial reform, however, was as difficult as it was necessary; it seemed impossible to bring the hoards of gold and silver to light when countless plunderers stood ready on every side. The proposals for a Persian expedition had been abandoned, and it was thus impossible to depend upon the traditional means of providing Italy with money—conquest by force of arms. From Alexandria Rome had taken the last of those great treasures accumulated by the Mediterranean states during earlier centuries; this wealth had now been poured into the bottomless abyss of Italian want, in which many another treasure had disappeared, from the riches of Mithridates to the Druid temple treasures of Gaul. There was no accumu-

wise explained as undertaken for the purpose of securing his communications between Gaul and Italy; but we shall see that provision was made for this latter necessity at a much later date, and that the high-roads of the Little and Great St. Bernard were probably constructed several years later. About this date preparations were also made for the Arabian expedition, and here again one of the objects in view was to seize the treasures which the Arabs were supposed to possess. The fact is likely enough in itself, and is attested with much detail by Strabo (XVI. iv. 22). Finally Augustus visited Gaul in this year and called a *conventus* of the Gallic chiefs at Narbonne, as we shall see; he then ordered that a census should be taken in Gaul. The object of this measure was not mere statistical curiosity, for we shall find that its execution aroused great irritation throughout Gaul. The census was a preliminary to the increase of the Gallic tribute, and proof of the fact will be found in the story of Licinus and in a text of St. Jerome. Thus we have four important measures intended to procure money or precious metals for the treasury, and it is therefore obvious that in these years the financial question was the first care of Augustus. Its prominence is, indeed, only natural after so great a revolution.



lated wealth to be found nearer at hand or more easily secured than the treasures of the Persian court, apart from the interior of Arabia, where certain peoples were said to sell spices and precious stones to foreigners and to have accumulated the purchase-money, as they bought nothing in return.\* Augustus, however, did not care to risk a failure in this direction, and required time to organise an Arabian expedition. 27 B.C.

Meanwhile he must have money, and there were but three modes of procuring it. The most natural means was to resume the working of the abandoned mines, but this was a method which required more trouble and expenditure than would be necessary to steal the money from those who already possessed it. It was also possible to collect the taxes with greater stringency and to increase the revenue by further taxation. Such measures, however, could be used only within very narrow limits, if no other means of procuring money could be found. Augustus as proconsul could undoubtedly recommence the working of the mines and exert greater pressure upon the subjects of his three provinces; as *imperator* he could also strike coins of good alloy for the payment of his soldiers in place of the the debased coinage, and this he had begun to do; as consul, again, he could point out abuses and defects in the administrative machinery and propose imposts and reforms to the Senate and people. But the direction and control of the exchequer were out of his power; this responsibility had been once more transferred to the Senate, and since the last reform had become the special care of the *præfecti ærarii Saturni*, who were directly appointed by the Senate.† It was equally impossible for Augustus to superintend the collection of the tribute or the governmental expenditure in the provinces of other governors.‡ Moreover, it was no easy matter at that time to propose new methods of taxation or financial reforms. There would have been a terrible outburst

New sources  
of revenue.

\* Strabo, XVI. iv. 19, XVI. iv. 22.

† Hirschfeld, *Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der Röm. Verwaltung*, Berlin, 1876, i. p. 10.

‡ This was so entirely a fact that the power of intervention in other provinces than his own was not granted to him until the year 23, as we shall see hereafter. Dion, liii. 32.

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of exasperation in Italy if peace had followed the example of revolution in calling for money. Augustus could not entertain for a moment the idea of imposing fresh taxation upon the metropolis unless he were willing to endanger the popularity he had acquired with such difficulty. Nor would the Senate or the people have approved any such idea. The resources of the east were exhausted, and after the experience of Actium Augustus regarded undue pressure in that quarter as a mistake. Thus nothing could be asked of Italy, the eastern tribute could not be increased and the new Egyptian tribute was inadequate to fill the treasury. The only remaining sources of revenue were the barbarian provinces of Europe, the Gaul of Cæsar's conquest, Pannonia and Dalmatia, which Augustus had conquered himself, and which had hitherto proved almost entirely unproductive. Augustus had intended for some time to lay tribute on these barbarians; it was not likely, however, that any appreciable increase of revenue would be forthcoming from such poor and uncivilised peoples.\* In short, the financial situation seemed no less embarrassing than the political.

The leading  
principles of  
Augustus'  
government.

Wealthy and powerful, the object of universal admiration, overwhelmed with distinctions and almost with divine honours, Augustus cherished no illusions upon this point; he realised that his strength was insignificant when compared with the difficulties against which he had to struggle. To this cause we must chiefly attribute the permanence of his power and his fortune. The first ten years of his government are characterised by a kind of fear of his own power, and, as such, can only be explained by the hypothesis that Augustus had continually before his mind the tragical destiny of the four persons who had succeeded in securing the chief power before himself—Crassus, Pompey, Cæsar and Antony. Above all, the extra-

\* I have assumed that the tributes of the European provinces were increased about this time; as regards Gaul, this assumption is confirmed by the texts of St. Jerome, as we shall see, and as regards the other provinces it is confirmed, as we shall also see, by the fact that some years later a great agitation was to break out in all these provinces, provoked by the taxation laid upon them. Hence we may assume that when peace was re-established the former tributes were increased, or were levied with greater severity, which is practically the same thing.



ordinary nature of Antony's recent overthrow must have alarmed Augustus more than any other example of the kind, as he was one of the few who knew the secret of that disaster. The foundations of power in that age were fragile in the extreme. The exaggerated admiration of the crowd became hatred with remarkable rapidity, whenever the masses were disillusioned, for they invariably imputed criminal designs to the object of their admiration and never dreamt of blaming their own stupidity. One false step, one imprudent act, and the master of the empire would see his power collapse around him and would perish amid the ruins of it. Hence in the year 27 B.C. nothing could have seemed more dangerous to Augustus than to play a new "political comedy" before that exasperated public which had already stoned several actors while the drama was in progress. What advantage had Antony gained from his double-faced policy, with all its cleverness, or from the long comedy in which he had appeared, now as Egyptian king and now as Roman proconsul? Whatever the skill, the power and the good fortune of the actor, nothing was more dangerous than overweening ambition and the employment of ingenious measures to satisfy its demands. At the present moment the facts of the situation must be faced; sagacity and prudence were the watchwords; the leader must move slowly and quietly, with cautious and unrelenting energy; *festina lente* was a favourite proverb with Augustus;\* universal pacification was now required, and must be secured through a benevolent and docile government, by useful and sagacious work rather than by noisy and theatrical performance.

"To unify interests as far as possible without wounding convictions"; in such terms has a modern historian defined Napoleon's object during his consulate,† and the words are very applicable to the principate of Augustus. With the restoration of peace and prosperity Italy would feel less ambition to satisfy her longing for glory; when she had learned to appreciate the good intentions, the moderation and the justice of a beneficent *princeps* she would no longer reproach him

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His respect  
for constitu-  
tional forms.\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 25.† Vandal, *L'Avènement de Bonaparte*, Paris, 1092, i. p. 415.



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with want of enterprise in failing to attack the Parthians. The Italian roads were in urgent need of repair, and the treasury was almost empty; with the wealth of Egypt Augustus might have undertaken this work, and have secured the universal gratitude of the nation by such munificence. He would not, however, entertain the project in this form; he preferred to hide himself behind the Senate. He called a meeting of the most influential senators and explained his wish to repair the Flaminian way and all the bridges from Rome as far as Rimini; he persuaded each senator to undertake the repair of a certain section of roadway. Naturally this responsibility was wholly nominal, as Augustus paid the expense of all the repairs; \* thus, while bearing the burden, he divided the honour among the leading members of the Senate. The better to supervise the financial administration without infringing constitutional limits, he proceeded to organise in his own house for his personal use a kind of Treasury department, composed of the most intelligent and instructed of his numerous slaves and freedmen. As president of the Senate, consul and proconsul of three great provinces, he had no difficulty in providing his clerks with all details of revenue and expenditure; it then became their duty to keep the imperial accounts so that he could tell at any moment what the revenue or the expenditure of the republic might be, the amount produced by different branches of taxation, the expenses incurred by the several departments, and the measure of the national debt.† Armed with these

\* Dion, liii. 22; Mon. Anc. (Lat.), iv. 19-20; C. I. L. xi. 365.

† This most important information is given us by Suetonius, *Augustus*, 120: . . . *breviarium totius imperii, quantum militum sub signis ubique essent, quantum pecuniæ in ærario et fiscis et vectigalorum residuis. Adiecit et libertorum servorumque nomina a quibus ratio exigi posset.* These slaves and freedmen formed a State finance department for the personal use of Augustus, and their accounts were often more detailed and exact than those of the republican officials; they were evidently intended as a check upon the latter. In other words, Augustus could not trust the zeal and vigilance of the magistrates, and therefore organised private offices of State to provide himself with the necessary information required for government. This device was no infringement of the constitutional principle or of the responsibility of the *princeps*, and was a benefit to the administration. A passage in Dion (liii. 30) and the episode of the illness in the year 23 prove that this was the date when Augustus organised these statistical and accountant offices



private accounts, which were often more accurate than those kept by the *præfecti ærarii Saturni*, he was able to test any proposal for financial reorganisation which might be submitted to the Senate; he could warn or censure personally or through the Senate magistrates who incurred useless expense or were neglectful in the collection of taxes and the administration of State property; in short, without the official position or responsibility of an actual financial minister, he was able to exert ministerial authority.

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It was, however, essential to bring more money into circulation without delay to meet both the necessities of the State and of individuals. Augustus resolved to reconquer the gold-producing regions in Spain inhabited by the Cantabrians and Asturians and to resume the working of the mines which had been abandoned during the anarchy of the last century, when the natives had revolted against the authority of Rome. He also resolved to conquer the valley of the Salassi in the Alps. Finally he decided, acting probably through a senatorial decree, to increase the tribute paid by Gaul, the Alpine populations, the Illyrian provinces, and in particular by Dalmatia and Pannonia. At the same time, to secure his hold of Rome and of the republic without any display of force or undue influence, he patiently worked to attach every social class to the new government and to secure their mutual harmony, and these bonds were forged of golden chains, delicate and almost invisible, but none the less strong. From this moment Augustus laid down one of the essential principles for the future policy of the empire—that expenditure should be wide and free at Rome and directed to the profit of every class. If he did not place the interests of the metropolis above every other imperial consideration, he none the less regarded them as of first-rate importance. From this moment and for centuries afterwards the public festivals at Rome were a governmental care, as

Expenditure  
at Rome.

The "book of receipts and militia" which Augustus entrusted to Piso is the *breviarium totius imperii*, compiled by the slaves and freedmen, which Augustus left behind him at his death, according to Suetonius. See Suetonius, *Augustus*, 28: *rationarium imperii radidit*. This department was in existence during the year 23 B.C., and must therefore have been created about that time.



27 B.C.

serious as the equipment of the legions. The treasury was almost empty ; every public department, whether concerned with frontier defence or with the upkeep of the roads, was disorganised for want of money ; the empire was exhausted. However, Augustus proceeded, even before these wants were supplied, to expend huge sums from his own purse upon public works in Rome of second-rate importance ; he urged his friends and relatives to follow his example, that there might be no lack of work and money for the lower and middle classes. He not only continued the repair of the temples, but undertook a careful restoration of the great national sanctuary of Jupiter on the Capitol and of Pompey's theatre.\* He reconstructed the portico raised by Cnæus Octavius almost a century earlier, which had been destroyed by fire ; † at the beginning of the Via Sacra he built a temple to the Lares, rebuilt on the Quirinal the ancient temple of Quirinus, and upon the Aventine the no less ancient temples of Minerva and Juno Regina.‡ If religion diminished at Rome it would not be for want of temples ! Augustus also entertained the idea of constructing a new forum. The old forum and Cæsar's forum were inadequate for the needs of the town, which had greatly increased in area. Augustus therefore wished to build a third forum about that temple to Mars Vindicator which he had vowed to build at Philippi, and which he wished to make the great sanctuary of the Roman army. He also continued the construction of the great theatre which Cæsar had begun. His friends Statilius Taurus and Cornelius Balbus, the nephew and the heir of Cæsar's richest official, had respectively consented to build another theatre. Agrippa had almost finished the Pantheon, and was busy with the completion of another great building begun by Cæsar, the *Sæpta Julia*, which was intended for the *comitia*.§ He had resolved to transform the humble *laconicum* behind the Pantheon into vast and sumptuous baths, on

\* Mon. Anc. iv. 9. I assume as probable, though not certainly proved, that this work of restoration was now begun, like other works of the same kind, of which we shall speak later. Cf. Mommsen, *Res Gestæ Divi Augusti*, Berlin, 1865, p. 55.

† Mon. Anc. IV. iii. 4 ; *Festus*, p. 178.

‡ Mon. Anc. iv. 6.

§ Gardthausen, *Augustus und seine Zeit*, i. p. 995.



the model of the baths in Syria; water was to be brought through a new aqueduct, forty miles in length, which was to be named *Aqua Virgo*.\* Agrippa also undertook to do for the water service what Augustus had done for the finances. By the constitution, the magistrates in charge of the aqueducts were the censors and ædiles. The censorship had lapsed for a considerable time, and the ædiles declined this responsibility. Agrippa therefore chose from his slaves active and intelligent functionaries to inspect the Roman aqueducts and be responsible for their upkeep and repair.†

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A more difficult task for Cæsar's son, the triumvir of the proscriptions, was reconciliation with the nobility; this object, however, Augustus pursued with indefatigable patience, with unwearied perspicacity and with all the influence at his command. During the elections he supported the leading candidates, and helped them to secure magistracies as in ancient times; he lost no opportunity of displaying his affability to the nobility as a whole, and to its most prominent members; but he also followed a far more practical method than the distribution of kindly words and greetings: he undertook to repair the fortunes of the great families which had fallen upon evil days. In the provinces Rome possessed vast property in land, forests and mines, which had been increased during the civil wars; the republic had turned these possessions to account by leasing them to companies of *publicani*. These companies were now dissolved, capital was scarce and the speculative temperament had grown weak; consequently many of these large properties had been abandoned, while their revenues were diverted from the public treasury in many other directions. This was a long-standing abuse, and through the Senate Cæsar ordered a survey to be made throughout the empire of these great possessions, that they might be turned to better account; the civil wars, however, had hampered and impeded the work of the commissioners in various parts of the empire, and in the year 27 no complete survey seems to have been made.‡

The new government and the aristocracy.

\* Gardthausen, *Augustus und seine Zeit*, i. p. 995.

† Frontin, *De aq.* 98.

‡ Cf. Ritschl, *Die Vermessung des Römischen Reichs unter Augustus, die Welt-Karte des Agrippa, und die Cosmographie des sogenannten Æthicus*, *Rhein. Mus.*, Neue Folge, i. p. 481 ff.



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Augustus had already made arrangements to conclude this work, and as soon as the war was over he executed this design, with the object of extracting a proper revenue from the holdings, at any rate in his own provinces; they were assigned by perpetual or annual leases to townships or individuals. In this way the republic could rely upon a steady source of income; the property, and especially the lands, were no longer abandoned to needy tax-gatherers and other extortioners, but were placed in the hands of tenant proprietors, who treated them with corresponding respect; many people might thus derive advantage from this great source of wealth. Augustus reserved a portion of these holdings for the impoverished aristocracy as a compensation for the property they had lost in the proscriptions and the civil wars.

Difficulty of  
Augustus' task.

Thus his first object was to organise a moderate government which would respect tradition and would restore the fortunes of Italy and of the State. Italy would then agree to abandon the conquest of Persia and her regrets for the past. Peace, financial reorganisation and respect for the constitution were the three central points of Augustus' policy; as an additional proof of his moderation he proposed to absent himself from Rome, making the war with the Cantabrians and Asturians his excuse, though the enterprise was by no means so important as to demand the presence of the commander-in-chief. A lengthy absence from Rome would be advantageous to himself from every point of view. He would avoid the fatigue of supporting in person the exaggerated admiration of which he was then the object; officials and citizens would grow accustomed to act for themselves without coming to him for advice upon every point; his absence would also diminish the possibility that he might make mistakes, offend his subjects, or disappoint the exaggerated opinion in which the people held himself and his power. The recollection of twenty years of civil war could not be wiped out in a few months. The remnants of the aristocracy, the survivors of the proscriptions and of Philippi, the sons or nephews of the victims of the revolution, would meet centurions and adventurers in the Senate wearing the same emblems as themselves, men who



had entered the Senate after Philippi, had seized their ancestral property, ruined their dearest relatives and shattered the long-standing power of their class. The surviving members of the nobility might be willing to regard as their equals the great revolutionary leaders such as Mæcenas, Agrippa and Pollio, whose humble birth was counterbalanced by their fame, their wealth and their culture; on the other hand, they would regard the obscurer senators as men who had usurped the property and the dignity of others. To remain at Rome as consul, to preside over sessions of the Senate and to live in the midst of these conflicting forces without giving offence was a task of extreme delicacy. A further consideration of little importance to ourselves, but not without its lesson for Augustus, was the fate of Cæsar, which proved that popular admiration, offices, lictors and the sanctity of the tribunate were no adequate protection against the dagger-thrust of some second Brutus, while obvious precautions to meet this danger would certainly wound republican feeling. Augustus availed himself of the custom which allowed him to maintain German and Gallic slaves for the defence of his house and his person; but he could not use this precaution to a larger extent than other senators, though his danger was much greater than theirs.

Under pretext of illness he absented himself from the Latin games held in the month of May, though as consul it was his duty to preside over them. Whether his illness was more than an excuse to avoid the holiday crowd, in which he would be forced to mix without defence, we cannot say. The elections then passed off without disturbance. The age of republican prosperity seemed to have returned. Probably no candidates appeared who had not previously secured the approval of Augustus; his popularity, his wealth, and his numerous friends made him the supreme arbiter of the *comitia*, in practice, if not in law. Two consuls only were appointed, Augustus and T. Statilius Taurus; the old tradition of two consuls for one year had been restored in all its stringency, and the numerous "little consuls" of the revolution had been abolished. The attitude of Augustus during the following years shows that he did not wish to assume the responsibility of appointing every magistrate,

Preparations  
for departure.



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and desired to see the *comitia* in full enjoyment of their former vigour and freedom. This was an additional reason for his journey to Spain, where he could escape the importunities of ambitious candidates. But before he could start there was still much to be done. Public opinion was still expecting a Parthian war and other glorious campaigns, and must now be prepared for his more modest designs. Italy was hoping for the conquest of vast empires, magnificent towns and rich treasures, and it was impossible to face the country with the curt announcement that Augustus was setting out for the conquest of deserted valleys, barren mountains and abandoned mines. He therefore spread a rumour that he proposed to conquer Britain before he attacked Persia; after his departure he intended to send news of great revolts in Spain and to secure general credence by successive detailed reports; thus he would accustom the public to the idea of the expedition, and if he travelled slowly might seize the right moment for changing his route.\*

The govern-  
ment of Rome  
in the absence  
of Augustus.

It was, however, essential that his departure should not disturb that peace which Rome had enjoyed for several years; otherwise his absence would be regretted, and, indeed, regarded as a great mistake and misfortune. Who, then, could take his place? Agrippa, his colleague in the consulship for that year, and Statilius Taurus, who was to be consul the next year, were men of undoubted capacity; Augustus, however, was not sure that in his absence the mere authority of the consuls, unsupported by armed force, would be adequate to maintain order amid the turbulent multitude; for them the consulship had lost its old prestige since it had been held by nonentities of humble birth. To provide consuls with an armed force

\* Dion (liii. 25) says that Augustus actually intended to conquer Britain, but in chapter xxiii. (ὡς καὶ ἐς τὴν Βρεταννίαν στρατεύσων) he hints that the expedition to Britain was a pretext. In any case it was common opinion at Rome that Augustus was starting for the conquest of Persia and of Britain, as is proved by the eighth ode of Horace's third book. Yet it was impossible for Augustus to entertain such projects, as he had now reduced his army to twenty-three legions. Upon the hypothesis which I have given the inconsistencies are explained; Augustus allowed the public to believe that he was starting to accomplish Cæsar's designs in order to accustom them by degrees to his own more modest plans.



was out of the question, and some official was therefore required of greater dignity and weight and wholly republican in feeling. As antiquarianism had become fashionable, Augustus revived an old magistracy, the *præfectus urbi*; under the kings and the early republic this official had been appointed to take the place of king or consuls when they left Rome to conduct a war. Augustus then attempted to persuade Messala Corvinus to take this post, probably under senatorial nomination. Messala had been a great friend of Brutus, had fought with him at Philippi and had seen his death; though he had been reconciled to Augustus, he had remained faithful to the memory of his friend, whose praises he openly sang in his conversation and writings whenever opportunity offered.\* He belonged to a great noble family, was a firm and sincere republican, a famous general, and a patron of literary men, of whom he had a special following; his nomination would therefore reassure the most suspicious republican. Messala, however, refused at first.† He was probably intimidated by the difficulty of the task and the novelty of the expedient. The *præfectura urbis*, which had lapsed for centuries, might still be a republican and Roman institution in the eyes of antiquarians, but not in the eyes of the people, who had long forgotten its existence.

A yet more serious difficulty appeared in Egypt. Notwithstanding his fixed intention to follow a simple and consistent policy in the government of the empire, Augustus had been obliged to imitate Antony's double-faced policy in Egypt, though he used infinitely greater caution and acted upon constitutional lines. Unexpected embarrassments had immediately arisen in consequence of this equivocal position. In the vast and marvellous palace of the Ptolemies Gallus became the informal occupant of the throne of the Lagidæ; the luxury, the pleasure and the homage showered upon this middle-class citizen of *Forum Julii* nearly turned his head, as had happened

The viceroy  
of Egypt.

\* Plutarch, *Brutus*, 53.

† This seems to be proved by the promptitude with which he resigned his office, after the short term of six days. Messala was a sensible character, and his promptitude in this matter can only be explained by admitting that he was nominated against his will.



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to Antony. He had accumulated vast wealth,\* had accepted the homage due to kings and had permitted the erection of numerous statues in his honour : † he had also begun to govern with the licence of an oriental tyrant and to think of founding a great empire for himself. He had left Alexandria to crush a petty revolt in the centre of the country, and, in order to make an example, had completely destroyed Thebes ; ‡ thus, contrary to the wishes of Augustus, he had continued that policy of expansion towards the interior of Africa and the sources of the Nile which at every age has been a necessity to any state in possession of Egypt.

The forward  
policy of  
Gallus.

While Gallus was undoubtedly anxious to satisfy his own wish for glory and plunder, he was no doubt equally anxious to impress the Egyptians with the new government, and to convince them of its greater severity and vigour compared with the rule of the Ptolemies. He had accordingly, probably in the year 28, made an expedition into Nubia, the modern Soudan, and seems to have advanced as far as Dongola, a region, as perhaps he boasted, in which no Roman general or Egyptian king had yet set foot. He had succeeded in forcing the protectorate of Rome upon an early predecessor of Menelik, Triakontaschoeni, the Ethiopian king, whose ambassadors had met him at Philæ.§ Augustus could not approve this severity

\* Amm. Marcellinus, XVII. ii. 5. (Possibly his words are somewhat exaggerated, as he writes from the aristocratic point of view.)

† Dion, liii. 23. This is confirmed by the inscription recently discovered in Egypt: *Sitzungsberichte König. Preuss. Akad.*, 1896, i. p. 476.

‡ Hieron. (*Chron. ad. ann. Abrah.*, 1990, 27 B.C.) says: *Thebæ Ægypti usque ad solum erutæ*. This piece of information may well be brought into connection with that contained in the inscription referred to above and discovered in Egypt: *defectionis Thebaidis . . . victor*. If, as the inscription says, the Thebaid revolted, it is more than probable that Thebes was destroyed by Cornelius Gallus during this war. This fact throws some light upon the dissension between Augustus and Gallus, which probably arose from the divergence in their views of the policy by which Egypt should be governed. Augustus was anxious to follow a conciliatory policy in the east, and could not approve this barbarous violence.

§ See the inscription discovered in Egypt and printed in the *Sitzungsberichte König. Preuss. Akad.*, 1896, i. p. 476. The inscription is important because it probably reveals the origin of the friction between Augustus and Cornelius Gallus, an obscure historical point. It



or these rash enterprises ; he feared, as usual, that Egypt would be involved in heavy expense or in war, with which the three legions assigned to the realm of the Ptolemies would be unable to cope. He was unable, however, upon his own authority to check the restless ambition of Gallus, who was already famous for his military exploits, his literary work and his services to the triumphant party and to Augustus himself ; Gallus, indeed, regarded himself almost as the equal of the *princeps*. Nor, again, was it possible for Augustus to oppose this dignitary by using his uncertain, equivocal and non-Roman authority as king of Egypt, the less so as it was likely that the bold and arbitrary Gallus was popular in Italy, where public opinion favoured the humiliation and oppression of Cleopatra's former subjects. Thus Gallus, undisturbed by the authority of the Senate or of Augustus, acted in Egypt precisely as he pleased. He even seems to have uttered public and bitter criticism of Augustus' timidity, and to have gone so far as to set up inscriptions in Egypt in memory of his exploits, as if he had been their sole author ; in these he made no allusion to the man whom the Egyptians regarded as their sovereign, and thus forced them to ask themselves whether Augustus was the master of Egypt or whether Gallus was a revolted general. This strange attitude of Gallus seems to have aroused much mistrust, and when the cunning priests of Philæ were ordered to translate into hieroglyphics an inscription in honour of his exploits, in which Augustus was scarcely mentioned, they seem to have deceived him and to have substituted emphatic praises of Augustus in

is to be observed that in the inscription Cornelius Gallus relates the expeditions as his own work, and makes not the smallest reference to the auspices of Augustus. Hence we may conclude that the Egyptian prefect had used the vague nature of his commission and the weakness of Augustus to assume an almost independent attitude, as he was now making war upon his own initiative. Augustus endured rather than approved the conquests of Gallus, as is shown by the fact that he speedily abandoned them on the first difficulty a few years later. This semi-independence of Gallus and his disagreement with Augustus may explain some obscure allusions in the ancient writers ; they throw some light upon the nature of the " foolish remarks " (*μάρταια*) which, according to Dion (liii. 23), Cornelius allowed himself at the expense of Augustus, and explain how he could be accused, as Suetonius says (*Aug.* 66), of *ingratum et malevolum animum*.

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place of his eulogies of himself. These mysterious characters were naturally unintelligible to Gallus.

Valerius  
Largus.

Thus it was necessary to stop Cornelius Gallus on his new career of conquest. The task was by no means easy, as Augustus would not use the means at his disposal. Eventually he seems to have fallen back upon the intervention of the Senate and public opinion. Many officers returning from Egypt related the strange exploits of Gallus, no doubt with the usual exaggerations. Among these officers one of the most furious was a certain Valerius Largus, who seems to have had some reason for personal hostility to the *præfectus Ægypti*. It is probable that Augustus indirectly induced Largus to denounce the absurdities of Gallus to the public, in the hope that the popular disapproval might intimidate the Egyptian governor.

Departure of  
Augustus from  
Rome.

Augustus, however, had left Rome before Largus could begin these revelations. He probably started as soon as Valerius Messala had consented to accept the *præfectura urbis* for the following year. The ostensible reason for his expedition was the conquest of Britain, which Cæsar had already attempted, and preparations for revenge upon the Persians were also announced. Horace sped his departure with good wishes, predicting that upon his return he would be adored as a god. But the motive of Augustus' journey was not to gain divine honours, but to conquer a rich mining district, to spend a few useful years away from Rome, and thus to gain time in which he might consider the future course of events.



## CHAPTER IX

### ROME AND EGYPT

The family of Augustus—The new republic and the young men—The *conventus* of Narbonne—Gaul in 27 B.C.—Twenty-five years after Alesia—Flax-growing in Gaul—Beginnings of the Roman administration in Gaul—The first scandal under the new system—The accusations against Cornelius Gallus—Augustus and the scandal—Messala resigns the *præfectura urbis*—The Spanish war—The ædileship of Martius Egnatius Rufus—The candidature of Rufus for the prætorship—The second *præfectus Ægypti*—The defects of the new constitution—Republican institutions and the new customs—Alexandrine art—Alexandrine artists at Rome—Love, the family and woman—The corruption of morals—The moral decadence of the nobility—Love-poetry; Tibullus and Propertius—Peace and war and the elegies of Tibullus—Cynthia and Propertius—The fundamental inconsistency in the constitution of Roman society—The odes of Horace—Horace and tradition—Composition of the odes—The ideal unity of the odes—The patriotic and erotic odes—Horace's idea of life—Inconsistencies and uncertainties—The fear of death.

AUGUSTUS took with him to Spain his step-son\* Tiberius Claudius Nero, the son of Livia, who was now fifteen years of age (born on November 16, 42); he was also accompanied by his nephew, Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the son of Octavia and of the famous consul of the year 50; he is supposed to have been born some months before Tiberius, in the year 43. Tiberius and Marcellus were thus little more than youths, and yet Augustus took them thus early to war. Among the principles of the old aristocratic policy there was one which Augustus was especially anxious to revive, the principle which gave

Tiberius and  
Marcellus  
accompany  
Augustus.

\* Dion (liii. 26) informs us that Tiberius and Marcellus were at the Spanish war with Augustus in the year 25. Hence it seems reasonable to suppose that they started with him.

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responsibility to youth and did not reserve the highest offices and the most difficult missions for old men. He wished young men to have their chance, as in the flourishing days of the aristocracy.\*

The family of  
Augustus.

The increasing corruption of the nobility was due to the fact that its members had been condemned to inactivity at a time when mental and physical energy is squandered in vice and debauchery unless it can be directed to higher ends. On the other hand, the aristocracy had been thinned by the civil wars, and if the most important posts were to be given to its members the admission of young men was inevitable, for the supply of older candidates was insufficient. With his habitual

\* Cicero, *Phil.* V. xvii. 47: *Majores nostri, veteres illi, admodum antiqui, leges annales non habebant, quas multis post annis attulit ambitio. . . . Ita sæpe magna indoles virtutis, priusquam reipublicæ prodesse potuisset, exstincta fuit*; 48: . . . *admodum adulescentes consules facti*. Tacitus, *An.* xi. 22: *apud majores . . . ne ætas quidem distinguebatur, quin prima juvenia consulatum ac dictaturam inirent*. The rapid careers of the relatives of Augustus, Tiberius, Marcellus and Drusus, which have been considered as a proof of Augustus' intention to concentrate the power in his own family by means of privilege, are much rather one of his great efforts to restore the old aristocratic and republican traditions. In this respect Augustus wished to revive the republic of Scipio Africanus. Indeed, not only his relatives, but even citizens who were not connected with him, obtained high office during his lifetime while they were still young. For instance, L. Calpurnius Piso was consul in 15 B.C., at the age of thirty-three. He was born in 48 B.C., and died at the age of eighty (Tacitus, *An.* vi. 10). L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, who died in 2 A.D. (Tacitus, iv. 44), was consul in 16 B.C. If he had been consul at the age which Cicero calls legal, at forty-three, he would have died at the age of eighty-four, and Tacitus would have mentioned this unusual longevity, as in the case of Piso. His silence shows that Domitius could not have been very old, and assuming that he died at the age of seventy-one he would have been consul at thirty. C. Asinius Gallus, the son of the famous writer, born in 41 B.C. (Servius, *ad Virg. Ecl.* iv. 11), was consul in 8 B.C., at the age of thirty-three. P. Quintilius Varus was consul in 13 B.C., and twenty years later, in 7 A.D., was sent out as governor of Germania. It is not probable that such a post would have been entrusted to an old man; it is more likely that it was given to a man aged about fifty; he, then, was not more than thirty at the time of his consulship. If we knew the dates of the births of the consuls we could probably produce many other examples of the same kind. In any case, the practice is natural; Augustus would have been obliged to follow it whether he wished to or not; he was anxious to revive the aristocratic principle, and was therefore obliged to open the door to youth, as so many of the aristocracy had perished. See Suetonius, *Aug.* 28.



caution, Augustus seems to have secured approval for a general modification of the existing laws which determined the age limit for office; \* he doubtless intended to secure special dispensations from the Senate to meet the case of young men who were worthy of office; by thus initiating the members of his own family into military and political careers he set an example to the younger members of the aristocracy as a whole. He had taken under his authority or had entrusted to Octavia or to Livia, not merely Julia, his only daughter by Scribonia in 39, but also all the children of his family whose fathers had perished in the revolution: the two sons of Livia, Tiberius, then aged fifteen, of whom we have spoken, and his younger brother, Nero Claudius Drusus, born in 38; the five sons of his sister Octavia by Marcellus and Antony, namely, the two Marcelli, the Marcellus who accompanied Augustus to Spain, and the two Antonii, born before the triumvir had abandoned his wife for Cleopatra; the younger son of Antony and Fulvia, who must have been about the age of Tiberius, and whose name had been changed to Julius Antonius; finally, the three surviving children of Antony and Cleopatra, Cleopatra Selene, Alexander Helios and Philadelphus.† Of these twelve children, the first nine, of pure Roman blood, had already been subjected by Augustus to the traditional course of education; the girls went to the loom and the boys to war from an early age. Though they were carefully instructed, both boys and girls, in literature and philosophy, the *princeps* declined to wear any togæ except those woven in his own house by his own women, according to the practice of the great lords in the aristocratic period.‡ He was also anxious to introduce young men to active life at an early age, and to temper their intellectual development by the necessity for practical effort. The three last-named children, the illegitimate offspring of an Asiatic queen and a great discredited Roman, seem to have been retained by Augustus as dynastic instruments for his oriental policy. Possibly he was already attempting to make use of the

\* Cp. p. 141.

† Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, Paris, ii. p. 360.

‡ Suetonius, *Aug.* 73.

27 B.C. little Cleopatra in the organisation of Mauretania, which Cæsar had annexed. In that province he proposed to re-establish the national dynasty and to place upon the throne of Juba the son of the king conquered by Cæsar, who had been brought up at Rome and had received a Græco-Roman education; together with this kingdom, Juba was to have the little Cleopatra as his queen.\*

The political  
condition of  
Gaul.

Augustus halted in Gaul at Narbonne, where he found the nobles representing the whole of Gaul, who doubtless had been summoned to that town.† Thus he saw before him the last remnants of the Gaul of Cæsar and of Vercingetorix. Twenty-five years had passed since the fall of Alesia; Antony had seen the impetuosity of the Gauls upon the battlefield, and the indomitable courage with which they had continued ambush and revolt for many years, but he himself would not have recognised the Gaul of his day in the aged men who gathered at Narbonne about Augustus. The Gaul of Vercingetorix had been practically reconciled with Rome; disarmed and peaceful, the country was devoted to agriculture and cattle-breeding, and was growing wealthy by these methods. Though its admiration and imitation of Roman manners was not whole-hearted, the younger generation, which had not witnessed or but dimly remembered the great national struggle, was becoming Romanised. From the time of Cæsar's conquest Rome had numerous friends among the Gallic nobility, which was exasperated by domestic confusion, by the insubordination of the plebs and the aggrandisement of the plutocracy; further causes of alarm were the growing military weakness of the country and the preponderance of Germanic influence. The Gallic nobles were alternately swayed by love of independence and fear of the Germans, and irritated from time to time by Roman arrogance or intimidated by popular menaces; for nine years their sympathies had wavered between Cæsar and Gaul, with the result that they remained neutral, and in moments of crisis had allowed enthusiastic minorities to act; thus it was that

\* Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, Paris, 1904, ii. p. 361.

† Livy, *Epit.* 134. The *conventus* of which Livy speaks was no doubt a congress of the Gallic leaders.



at the end of 52 the young Arverni, under the leadership of Vercingetorix, notwithstanding their scanty experience and their feeble influence, had been able to overthrow the government and to plunge the country into danger. The great revolt had failed; the irreconcilable nobility had been almost destroyed in the wars or had gone into exile; when the nationalist party had disappeared the majority of the old nobility had resumed their submissive attitude, the more readily as Cæsar had been able to reassure them by prudent concessions. The Ædui, the Lingones and the Remi had retained their position as allies, and could treat with Rome on an equal footing as independent states; numerous tribes had been declared free, authorised thereby to continue their own governments, and constrained merely to pay part of the usual tribute.\* Many tribes had been left in enjoyment of their territory, their vassals, the taxation which they had levied and the rights and privileges which they had claimed before the conquest; in no case, certainly, had tribute been increased,† so that the Gallic tribute, assuming that it was paid in full, had remained at the very moderate amount of forty millions of sesterces, as originally fixed. Cæsar had thus attempted to conceal the fact of annexation beneath his concessions to the national pride; he had instituted no persecution of the wavering nobility, who had sometimes helped him and sometimes betrayed him; he had even divided among the noble families inclined to accept Roman supremacy‡ the property of the nobles who had perished or had fled and of the wealthy families

\* Hirtius, B. G. viii. 49: *honorifice civitates appellando*. Pliny, H. N. iv. 31 (17) and 32 (18), adds the Carnutes to the number of the allies. I am inclined to think with Hirschfeld that this is probably a mistake, at any rate as regards the period immediately succeeding the conquest. We can understand why the Ædui, the old friends of Rome, the Remi and the Lingones, who had given Cæsar valuable help in the war of 52, had secured their position as allies without difficulty. It seems unlikely that this privilege had been gained by the Carnutes, who had struggled desperately against Rome. Pliny, H. N. iv. 31 (17), 33 (19), enumerates the free peoples, about a dozen in number, who are mentioned in the commentaries of Augustus, but it is difficult to say whether the number was the same at the end of the conquest. It was probably subject to alterations at different times.

† Hirtius, B. G. viii. 49: *nulla onera injungendo*.

‡ *Ibid.*: . . . *principes maximis præmiis adficiendo*.



27 B.C.

who had disappeared in the revolution; during the civil wars he had taken many Gallic nobles into his service, had rewarded them with gifts and even given them the Roman citizenship. Augustus found numerous representatives at Narbonne bearing the name of Caius Julius, who added the barbarous *cognomen* of their Celtic family to the Latin *prænomen* and *nomen*; these were Gallic nobles who had received the citizenship from his father, and who formed a kind of superior class among the Celtic nobility \*

Economic  
condition of  
Gaul.

Thus the civil wars, far from hampering Cæsar's work, had rather accelerated its accomplishment, and had actually hastened the pacification of Gaul. Intimidated by recollections of revolt and of Vercingetorix, obliged to recall their legions from Gaul and conscious of their own weakness, the triumvirs had left the country to itself in independence which was real if not nominal. Several coins of this period show that the Roman proconsuls, whose military power was weak, governed Gaul through the noble families, and allowed free scope to the old national institutions; † their energy was thus confined to preventing revolts and wars between the different tribes and to collecting a modest tribute. Probably Gaul had ceased any payment of tribute at this time. The government was thus in no way severe or stringent, and Gaul had speedily repaired her losses. When the legions were withdrawn extraordinary taxation, extortion, pillage and violence came to an end. A tribute of forty millions of sesterces, assuming it to have been paid, was no strain upon so rich a country; domestic peace had broken up the bands of warriors and adherents which had served under the nobility in the wars; some had become artisans, others farmers; ‡ others, again, were enrolled in the Roman cavalry, and had gone to plunder Italy or other countries during the civil wars, and thus to collect wealth for

\* On the frequent occurrence of the name of Julius in Gaul at this period see Anatole de Barthélemy, "Les Libertés gauloises sous la Domination romaine," in the *Revue des Questions historiques*, 1872, p. 372.

† See the interesting study of Anatole de Barthélemy, "Les Libertés gauloises sous la Domination romaine," in the *Revue des Questions historiques*, 1872, p. 368 ff.

‡ Strabo, IV. i. 2 (178): νῦν δὲ ἀναγκάσσονται γεωργεῖν, καταθέμενοι τὰ ὄπλα. . . .



enjoyment in their own country. Finally Cæsar's conquest had brought into circulation much unproductive wealth deposited in the temples or the houses of the rich; though some of this capital had been carried away to Italy, much of it had remained in Gaul, and was now widely distributed. War and the following peace had given Gaul pecuniary capital, manual labour and a certain security; the country was extremely fertile,\* as it is to-day, was well watered, covered with forests and rich in minerals,† and its productive power had largely increased in the last twenty-five years.

27 B.C.

Protected by the Alps and by the memory of Vercingetorix (this was the real service rendered to his country by the victim of Alesia), during the twenty years of civil war which had ravaged Italy and the eastern provinces Gaul had slowly and peacefully recovered much of the wealth which that terrible crisis had scattered or destroyed. Mining operations were begun in every quarter, especially for gold, and this precious metal was also sought in the river-beds; ‡ silver-mines were discovered about this time; § land was cleared, and the cultivation of flax, hitherto a speciality of the east, was begun; ||

The growth  
of Gallic  
civilisation.

\* Strabo, IV. i. 2 (178): ἡ δ' ἄλλη πᾶσα σίτον φέρει πολὺν καὶ κέγχρον καὶ βάλανον καὶ βοσκήματα παντοῖα, ἀργὸν δ' αὐτῆς οὐδέν, πλὴν εἴ τι ἔλεσι κεκάλυται καὶ δρυμοῖς.

† See the proofs given by Desjardins, *Géographie historique de la Gaule*, vol. i. Paris, 1876, p. 409 ff.

‡ On the Volcæ Tectosages (Strabo, IV. i. 13), on the Tarbelli (Strabo, IV. ii. 1); in the Cévennes (Strabo, III. ii. 8); in the rivers (Diodorus, v. 27).

§ The fact is stated by Diodorus (v. 27): κατὰ γοῦν τὴν Γαλατίαν ἄργυρος μὲν τὸ σύνολον οὐδὲ γίγνεται . . . ; while Strabo says, on the contrary, that silver was found among the Ruteni and the Gabali (IV. ii. 2). The words of Dion show that the silver-mines were discovered after the conquest. Dion's description of Gaul is obviously drawn from ancient documents which describe Gaul at the period of its independence. In Desjardins, i. p. 423 ff., is to be found a proof that many other silver-mines were worked by the Romans, but as Strabo does not mention them we cannot certainly say that these were begun at this moment.

|| Pliny, N. H. XIX. i. 7-8: *ignoscat tamen aliquis Ægypto secenti (linum) ut Arabiæ Indiæque merces importet itane et Galliæ censeatur hoc redditu? Cadurci, Caleti, Ruteni, Bituriges ultimique hominum existimati Morini, immo vero Galliæ universæ vela texunt. . . .* If we remember the slow economic progress of the ancient world it will not appear unreasonable to place in these years the beginnings of this industry, which was afterwards to become widely spread. It must be added that Strabo refers to flax as a flourishing industry among the Cadurci (VI. ii. 2).



27 B.C. manual labourers became more numerous after the dissolution of the little Gallic armies. As the country grew accustomed to this peace and prosperity the stability of the Roman domination increased, and was based upon an aristocracy of rich landholders, the older of whose members had forgotten the past, while the younger had never known it; the former were ready to endure and the latter began to admire the power of Rome, and were ready to take advantage of certain products of Mediterranean civilisation, such as oil and wine. Latin schools for the rich youth were doubtless already opened in different places; \* boats were even then sailing the rivers laden with oil or with Greek and Italian wines, the enervating sweetness of which had once proved a formidable temptation to the warlike Gauls.† In Gallia Narbonensis, which had been longest under Roman influence, Greek artists were called in by rich families to construct fine monuments; ‡ already the graceful divinities of Rome and of the east had made their appearance in the vast forests. Then, as ever, this happy country had rapidly risen from the ruins of the last war; then, as ever, the dominant state attempted by new taxation to share its flourishing prosperity. Gaul was perhaps the only province which had prospered amid the universal decadence, and it was therefore made responsible for part of the necessary expense for the maintenance of the army; the privilege of immunity from service which Gaul had enjoyed owing to Roman weakness during the preceding years was now abolished. In any case, part of the army would serve to defend Gaul against the Germans. The Gauls enjoyed the benefits of peace for the reason that they were protected by Roman legions; it was therefore just that Gaul should pay her debts to the army

\* We shall see that shortly afterwards there was a famous school at Augustodunum, the new capital of the Ædui.

† We shall see that in these years was probably introduced the *quadragesima Galliarum*, an impost of 2½ per cent. upon imports. The idea of such a tax would not have been entertained unless the importations into Gaul had been considerable. Of imported products the chief must have been oil and wine.

‡ For instance, the Mausoleum of the Julii at St. Rémy in Provence: see Courbaud, *Le Bas-relief romain a représentations historiques*, 1899, pp. 328-329.



by contributing to the expenditure upon its maintenance.\* At the congress of Narbonne Augustus probably contented himself with announcing a series of measures intended to pave the way for a reorganisation of the tribute, to which he made no allusion as yet. He ordered a general census, to verify the changes of individual fortune and to distribute the new burdens more equably. To help the legates in this task he seems to have left procurators in the country chosen from the most capable of his freedmen ; at the head of these was Licinus, the young German whom Cæsar had captured and afterwards set free. Licinus was acquainted with Gaul and the Celtic language, and was expert in financial administration.† After making these arrangements Augustus went to Spain, where great revolts had broken out, as he had announced in Italy. He arrived in time to inaugurate his eighth consulship at Tarragona on January 1 of the year 26.‡

26 B.C.

While he was on his way to Spain a strange event took place at Rome which nullified several of the wise arrangements made before his departure and profoundly disturbed public feeling. After the departure of Augustus, Valerius Largus proceeded to denounce the luxury, the rapacity, the pride and the insolence of the prefect of Egypt ; § but these accusations,

The case of  
Cornelius  
Gallus.

\* Livy, *Per.* 131, and Dion, liii. 22, definitely state that the most important act accomplished by Augustus during his short stay in Gaul was the census. This census was certainly not intended merely to satisfy statistical curiosity, and its only object could have been to increase the taxation of Gaul. Cæsar, as we have seen, did not increase this taxation, and it was improbable that any change was made during the civil war. This increased taxation explains the episode of Licinus twelve years later of which Dion speaks (liv. 21). We shall refer to this episode, and also to the discontent prevalent in Gaul during the following years ; we shall also find this hypothesis confirmed by the texts of St. Jerome Syncellus and the *Chronicon Paschale*, which have hitherto been somewhat misunderstood.

† Licinus is not mentioned by Dion as procurator of Gaul till somewhat later, about the year 16. But the considerable extent of his thefts at that date induce us to suppose that he had been in office for some time ; I have therefore assumed that Augustus installed him at the outset when he began his series of reforms.

‡ Suetonius, *Aug.* 26.

§ The scandal concerning Cornelius Gallus must have happened during the absence of Augustus from Rome, as it reached its height in the year 26 B.C., according to Dion (liii. 23).



26 B.C. instead of the slight sensation that was expected, provoked a tremendous explosion of national wrath; the aristocracy set the example by their furious invectives against Cornelius Gallus, and the other classes followed their lead; \* in a few days the Egyptian viceroy, an influential governor enjoying the general respect, had become a criminal of the lowest class deserving the extremity of torture; on all sides, and especially among the noble families, there was a fierce outcry for a salutary example. This sudden and mysterious sensation aroused by the excesses of the *præfectus Ægypti*, though somewhat tardy, had shaken Rome with horror; the citizens were indignant that their subjects should be treated as Gallus had dealt with the Egyptians. Some of his friends, including influential and upright men, had attempted to stem the current; † their efforts were in vain. Largus had been the subject of universal compliments, flattery and applause, especially from the nobles; intoxicated by his unexpected success, he had filled Rome with his accusations, and Gallus had already been condemned by public feeling before he had returned from Egypt or had had an opportunity of self-defence.

Causes of the  
outburst  
against him.

This was the first of those terrible scandals, both political and judicial, which were to claim so many victims among the upper classes under the empire; the suddenness of the outbreak and its extravagant exaggeration must have caused great anxiety to thoughtful minds. Under pretext of zeal for justice and honesty, the public was venting upon the unhappy Gallus that suppressed hatred which the civil wars had left behind. Peace had returned, but was peace only in outward seeming. Augustus, Agrippa and the leading members of the victorious party, a considerable number of their freedmen and certain clever but obscure plebeians had amassed great wealth during the civil wars; but the larger proportion of the senators possessed such modest means that under the reorganised republic the senatorial qualification had been fixed at four hundred thou-

\* Ammianus Marcellinus, XVII. iv. 5: *metu nobilitatis acriter indignatæ*.

† Dion, liii. 24, tells us that several citizens manifested their indignation at this outbreak against Gallus, which was unjust, or at any rate exaggerated.



sand sesterces. There were many knights whose names were still on the lists who would not venture to take their places in the theatre upon the fourteen rows of seats reserved for their order, because they had lost their fortunes during the civil wars; in consequence Augustus induced the Senate to authorise their occupation of those seats, notwithstanding their loss of property.\* All these people naturally cherished a profound hatred of the wealthy, and were inclined to consider palaces, villas, slaves and money as gained by theft to their own disadvantage; their bitterness was the greater as they were forced to admire in Augustus, Agrippa, Mæcenas and in all the leaders of the revolutionary party that spoliation under which so many had been victims, or considered themselves to have suffered.† The large fortunes made in Egypt after the conquest were especially obnoxious to every class. Cornelius Gallus, who had made a fortune in Egypt, was destined to become the victim of all who had not enjoyed his opportunities. A well-organised aristocracy directed this movement against Gallus for the pleasure of overthrowing one of the *novi homines* of the revolution, and to take vengeance at least upon one man for Philippi and the proscriptions. The poorer senators, the knights and the people followed the lead of the aristocracy, being furiously jealous of the wealth of others and servilely obsequious to the nobility whose power was rising. Gallus was lost, unless his fellow plunderers of the revolution came to his help with Augustus at their head. Augustus, however, was weak, while the friends of Gallus were easily discouraged and intimidated by the popular exasperation; peace had accentuated new forms of selfishness as base and stubborn as any that civil war produced, though disguised beneath the fair names of justice and right. Rome had been built, from the pavement of the streets to the temples of the gods, with the pillage of the world, and any philosopher could have asserted that Gallus had deserved well of the republic, since it was Egypt and not Italy

\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 40.

† Even in the erotic poetry of the period curious indications can be found of this popular antipathy to men who had enriched themselves in the civil war. See Tibullus, II. iv. 21; Ovid, *Amor.* III. viii. 9.

26 B.C.

that he plundered; his friends might have asked the city in its sudden burst of righteousness what Gallus had done that had not been done by Agrippa and Augustus and by every distinguished leader of their own generation; any citizen who had held his responsibility would have been glad to follow his example. Oligarchies, however, founded upon the feeble basis of revolution, are accustomed from time to time to abandon certain of their members to the resentment of the dominant party, and woe to those who are thus sacrificed; then, as at all times, citizens would rather see their neighbour perish than abandon their own privileges; they preferred to sacrifice the proud and impetuous Gallus rather than to restore any part of the wealth which they enjoyed. Augustus, to conciliate public opinion and to spare Gallus as far as possible, revoked his appointment and declared him exiled from his province and his household.\* This moderate punishment, however, would not satisfy public feeling; the punishment inflicted by Augustus proved that he considered Gallus guilty, and there was an outcry for greater severity. The *præfectus Ægypti* was abandoned to his fate; new accusers appeared with fresh charges, which were often exaggerated and fantastic, but were readily believed by the public.† It seems that his case was even laid before the Senate in order to secure his condemnation.‡ Men of feeling, however, were profoundly disturbed by this fierce persecution of a leading citizen, who was merely accused of actions which had redounded to the credit of others. At the outset of the year 26 Messala resigned the *præfectura urbis*, which he had held for no more than six days, on the excuse that he felt himself incapable of performing his duties and considered the post to be unconstitutional.§

\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 66; Dion, liii. 23. Augustus was evidently attempting by this decision to satisfy public opinion without ruining Gallus. Hence we may infer that though Augustus probably encouraged the movement against Gallus at first the consequences became far more exaggerated than he cared to see.

† Dion, liii. 23; Amm. Marc. XVII. iv. 5.

‡ This we learn from Dion, liii. 23, and Suetonius, *Aug.* 66, *Senatus-consultis ad necem compulso*.

§ These two explanations are respectively given by Tacitus, *Annales*,



Messala was probably intimidated by the fall of Gallus; his overthrow was a proof that the people no longer understood the duties of a *præfectus*. If the *præfectus Ægypti* had thus fallen into disgrace, the man in charge of a similar office at Rome was surely exposed to no less danger. Thus the efforts of Augustus to persuade Messala became so much waste of time; Rome was left without a *princeps* or *præfectus* and with but one consul. A catastrophe soon followed by which the agitation was increased; in despair in finding himself thus abandoned, Gallus committed suicide. Augustus made no attempt to find a new *præfectus urbi*, but left the town in charge of the other consul, Statilius Taurus, in the hope that all would go well, and began the war in the spring, himself assuming the command of the army.\* We can easily understand why the new commander-in-chief was anxious to prove his capacity for conducting a war, unsupported by the advice of Agrippa. The inconsistency of his military incapacity with the position he occupied was neither the most trivial nor the least dangerous of the contradictions by which he was harassed; the danger was increased by the obvious necessity for a reform of discipline throughout the army. Augustus had already abolished the most longstanding abuses; he no longer addressed the legionaries as "comrades," but as "soldiers." He had strictly excluded freedmen from the legions to restore the dignity of the military profession, which was to be the privilege of freemen, and he had re-established the former severe system of punishments and rewards.†

Taurus in  
charge of  
Rome.

vi. 11 (*quasi nescius exercendi*); and by St. Jerome, *Chron. ad a. Abr.*, 1991=728/26 (*incivilem potestatem esse contestans*). Both reasons might have been alleged by Messala. My statement that the catastrophe of Gallus induced Messala to resign is of course a conjecture; it seems, however, reasonable, as it provides an explanation for Messala's sudden resolve. The fate of Gallus must have caused Messala some misgivings, for the authority of both men depended upon the same political idea, the re-establishment of the old-time *præfectura*.

\* Dion, liii. 25; Suetonius, *Aug.* 20.

† Suetonius, *Aug.* 24-25. I think that the facts related in this passage belong to the early part of the government of Augustus; we shall see that towards the end of his life military discipline had again deteriorated.



26 B.C.

The case of  
Egnatius  
Rufus.

Unfortunately Augustus was not a born commander-in-chief. The Cantabrians and Asturians realised that if conquered they would be carried to the heart of the mountains to work in the gold-mines, and defended themselves with desperate courage; profiting by the vacillation of Augustus, they speedily involved him in a difficult situation by a series of clever and rapid marches. Fortunately he fell ill at the right time, and this fact enabled him to return to Tarragona and to transfer the command of his legions to his two legates, Caius Antistius and Caius Furnius.\* Augustus, with habitual piety, contented himself with vowing a new temple on the Capitol to Jupiter Tonans, as a thank-offering for a miraculous escape from lightning during the march; † if Rome did not recover possession of the Asturian gold-mines through his efforts she would at least receive an additional temple. However, after the sudden fall of Cornelius Gallus, another strange disturbance had broken out at Rome. An obscure man, Marcus Egnatius Rufus, was appointed ædile for the year 26, and discharged the duties of his office with unusual zeal. When a conflagration broke out the ædiles usually allowed the house to be consumed, saying that they had no means of extinguishing a fire; Rufus had attempted to do for fire what Agrippa had done for the water-supply and Augustus for the State accounts; he had formed several companies of firemen with his slaves, and, like Crassus, when a fire broke out he hastened to extinguish it, but, unlike Crassus, he did not charge for his services.‡ Rufus thus became very popular among the middle and lower classes, who thought as much of their houses and furniture as of the constitution. The *comitia* had approved a law indemnifying him

\* Dion (liii. 25) mentions only one legate, C. Antistius; Florus (II. xxxiii. 51, IV. xii. 51) mentions three, Antistius, Furnius and Agrippa. Orosius (VI. xxi. 6) mentions two, Antistius and Firmius. There is thus no doubt as regards Antistius. As to Agrippa, I am inclined to think that Florus was confusing this expedition with later wars; we know that during the years 27 and 25 Agrippa was at Rome, and Orosius makes no mention of him in this war. As for the *legatus* concerning whom Orosius and Florus disagree, it may reasonably be supposed that he was the Caius Furnius who was consul in the year 17 B.C.

† Suetonius, *Aug.* 39; *Mon. Anc.* iv. 5.

‡ Dion, liii. 24; *Vell.* II. xci. 3.



for the expense he had incurred on behalf of the public; \* as the elections of the year 25 were approaching his admirers wished to propose him as prætor,† in defiance of the law and of the constitutional principles which Augustus and his friends were anxious to re-establish. The nobility were irritated by this proposal, and asserted that if the fire brigade had extinguished conflagrations in the houses at Rome it had inflamed popular passions in men's minds.‡

26 B.C.

The overthrow of Gallus had revived the courage of the nobles, as it showed that the wealthy classes and the more respectable senators, the knights, and even the middle classes, now cherished a profound aversion for the men and for the deeds of the revolution period. The nobles were also encouraged by the change in public opinion, which became daily more obvious; as is often the case after revolutions, it was a change which inspired every social class with respect for the nobility, for wealth and for the glory of old time, and with hatred for the obscure and ambitious politicians who had entered the Senate after the Ides of March; these were considered as unworthy to represent the majesty of Rome in that great assembly. The nobility were thus emboldened to accuse Rufus of hatching sedition with his firemen and of renewing the mob agitations of earlier years; no one even considered the fact that Rufus was merely following the examples of Augustus and Agrippa. On this occasion, however, the nobles were mistaken. Rufus had not written fine poetry and conquered provinces like Gallus, but he had saved the dwellings

The attack upon Rufus compared with the case of Gallus.

\* Dion, lii. 24.

† Velleius Paterculus, II. xci. 3.

‡ Dion, liii. 24. The hatred of the nobles for Rufus is the subject of chapter xci. in the second book of Velleius. This hatred, political in origin, can alone explain the attack of the upper classes upon Rufus. Until the conspiracy against Augustus, which was an act of reprisal for the injustice he had suffered—always assuming the imputation to be true—Rufus had been guilty of no criminal act. Velleius himself, in spite of his opposition to him, is unable to mention any fact which justifies the hatred of the nobility. Granting that his zeal for the extinction of fires was somewhat self-advertising, it was none the less laudable, and only political hatred could make it a cause for blame. Rufus only dealt with the case of fire as Agrippa had dealt with the water-supply. Dion also praises him in liii. 24: ἄλλα τε πολλὰ καλῶς πράξας.



26 B.C. of the poor from fire, and popular support for his illegal candidature increased so rapidly that Statilius Taurus, the consul in charge of the elections, would not venture to strike his name from the list of candidates, and Rufus was elected.\* During the absence of Augustus, at a time when every one professed anxiety to restore the aristocratic constitution and adapt it to the needs of the age, an individual now proposed to revive class hatred and to rouse the impatience of the lower classes and the pride of the re-established nobility—and this man was a fireman. Provided only that conflagrations were promptly quenched, the people were ready to violate the fundamental principles of that constitution which had been re-established two years previously amid universal joy. The aristocracy, to show their power, were ready to leave the houses of the people to their fate under pretext of opposing mob law. Their opposition to Rufus was tantamount to an attack upon the first principles of that reform of public departments which Augustus and Agrippa were prudently attempting to introduce by organising private offices of slaves. The aristocracy, however, which had overthrown Gallus without difficulty, though he was a celebrated poet, an illustrious warrior and a powerful man, had been defeated by Rufus, whose sole merit lay in the fact that he had put out four fires. The contrast was ridiculous, but every one prepared to acquiesce in silence. Augustus himself resolved to give the *præfecture* of Egypt, the most important post of the empire after his own, to Caius Petronius, an obscure knight. Probably every leading man refused the post in fear of the fate of Gallus.† Augustus then continued

\* Dion, liii. 24.

† Who was the second *præfectus Ægypti*? Was it Ælius Gallus or Petronius? The question has been greatly discussed by German scholars. If no certain conclusion can be reached, it seems to me that there is a strong case for Petronius. I admit with Gardthausen that the vague *ὑπορέων* of Strabo (XVII. i. 53) is but a feeble argument, but there are other points. We may first note that another passage in Strabo (XVII. i. 54) shows that in the same year, 25 B.C., as we shall see, Ælius Gallus and Petronius were both in Egypt, and that one undertook the expedition to Arabia and the other to Nubia. The one must therefore have acted as *præfectus Ægypti* and the other as a subordinate. Now Josephus (XV. ix. 1 and 2) clearly states that in the thirteenth year of Herod's reign, from the spring of 25 to the spring of 24 B.C., Petronius was *ἐπαρχὴς* of Egypt—that is, *præfectus*—



to devote his attention to the gold-bearing regions of the empire, and from Tarragona followed the progress of the war against the Cantabrians and Asturians which his generals were conducting. For the following year, the year 25, he was preparing two expeditions, one to the territory of the Salassi, now the valley of Aosta, to seize the richest valley in the Alps for its gold-mines; the other expedition was intended for Arabia, to secure the treasures which the Arabs were then believed to possess.

Rome was thus left to itself in comparative apathy without the excitement of great enterprises and events; the harmony which had been apparently re-established after Actium gradually disappeared, while a strange confusion of contradictory ideas and sentiments began to obscure the true conception of means and of ends and the correspondence between

The defects  
of the restoration.

and (§ 3) that Ælius Gallus conducted the expedition to the Red Sea. Thus, according to Josephus, Ælius Gallus was a subordinate officer. This is confirmed by Pliny; in his narrative of the expedition of Petronius to Ethiopia (VI. xxix. 181) he speaks of him as "knight and prefect of Egypt"; when he narrates the expedition of Ælius to Arabia (VI. xxviii. 160) he speaks of him merely as knight. This evidence unsupported would be of no great value, but its confirmation by Josephus gives it importance. As a secondary expedition was on foot, it is not surprising that a subordinate officer should have been sent and that the *præfectus* remained in Egypt. Rome was anxious to maintain order in that country, and would not allow the chief magistrate to absent himself except for serious reasons. Finally Strabo provides another argument to show that Ælius Gallus was prefect of Egypt, not only after Petronius, but even several years after the date in question here; hence it is probable that Petronius was prefect for a number of years or that other prefects intervened between Petronius and Ælius Gallus. In fact, Strabo (II. v. 12) tells us that when Ælius Gallus was *præfectus Ægypti* he visited with his company the port of Myoshormos, on the Red Sea, where a hundred and twenty ships were assembled, employed in trade with India. The number of these ships was considerably less under the Ptolemies. He also tells us (XVI. iv. 24) that when Gallus made his expedition to Arabia, the Indian and Arabian trade went by the route of Leucomoma, Petra and Syria, whereas afterwards (*νυν*) almost the whole of the commerce passed through Myoshormos. There was thus a change of commercial routes, which could not have occurred four or five years after the fall of the Ptolemies. Hence the journey of Strabo and Gallus to Myoshormos must have taken place some years later. Petronius was therefore the second *præfectus Ægypti*, and Ælius directed the Arabian expedition as the *legatus* of Augustus, acting as a subordinate official. The *prænomen* of Petronius is not certain; Pliny calls him *Publius* and Dion *Caius*.



26 B.C. words and deeds, between theory and practice. Order had been established with more or less difficulty, and only the faintest echo of former faction feeling could be heard; nevertheless the forces of dissension were working within the city. The republic had been restored, and attempts to revive the old institutions were in progress; among the nobility a party of reform was working to restore the monopoly of office and power to the old families, by removing the low-born senators who had entered the curia during the revolution; aristocratic vanity, haughtiness and disdain began to rise, and the proud nobles even affected to despise Agrippa, of whom they were furiously jealous.\* But the patriotism which had been the life and soul of the old aristocratic system could not be revived; troublesome and expensive offices which had once been eagerly sought were now carefully avoided. Though the path of honourable service had been opened to young men, it was not easy to find great names for the lists of candidates; extraordinary expedients were constantly required, lest the most important public departments—that, for instance, of roads and ways—should be completely neglected.† The majority of the senators, instead of expending their fortunes in public works, as Cicero had advised, were fighting for lucrative offices, such as that of the *præfectus ærarii Saturni*, or directorship of the treasury; they even attempted to earn money as barristers, accepting payment for pleadings in the forum, notwithstanding the *lex Cincia*, which forbade the acceptance of any recompense for legal help.‡ These irregularities might be deplored, but how were they to be prevented? The majority of the senators could barely show the pecuniary qualification for their seats; four hundred thousand sesterces scarcely provided a decent livelihood, and put public bounty out of the question. The principle of free public service, essential to the old constitution, was entirely discordant with the present economic situation,

\* See Seneca, *Controv.* II. iv. 12, 13; p. 155 B.

† On the difficulty of providing for the upkeep of the roads see C. I. L. vi. 1464 and 1501, and the observations of Hirschfeldt, *Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der Röm. Verwaltung*, Berlin, 1876, i. pp. 110 and 111.

‡ We shall see that Augustus revived the *lex Cincia* a few years later.



under which some members of society were too rich and others too poor. Further antagonisms aggravated and complicated the contrast between the demands of public and private life. All were ready to praise the simplicity and the thrift of an earlier age; yet Augustus and his friends, with their vast expenditure at Rome, aroused a taste for luxury in every class. 26 B.C.

Rome may have thought that at Actium the audacity of Egypt had been repulsed, but after the victory she was unable to resist a less obvious but far more dangerous Egyptian invasion than that which Antony and Cleopatra had led. After the fall of the Ptolemies the artists, the traders in objects of luxury, and the artisans who had worked for the court of Alexandria, for its eunuchs and leading personages, began to seek a livelihood in the great city where the successor of the Ptolemies was living and where the vast treasures of Egypt had been transported. They came to Italy in a steady stream and disembarked at Puteoli; the humbler of them stayed in the Campanian towns from Pompeii to Naples, while others went to Rome. It was not for the successor of the Ptolemies that they were commissioned to build sumptuous palaces. Augustus was living on the Palatine in the house which had belonged to Hortensius; this residence was composed of several adjoining houses built by different owners, which Hortensius had purchased at different times and had united by alterations more or less successful.\* The Egyptian artists found work among the richest members of the senatorial and equestrian aristocracy, who were occupied in constructing upon the ruins of the revolution a new Rome of greater splendour than the old city, and were therefore inclined to welcome these workmen. By one of the many inconsistencies of the time, the conquest and the fall of Egypt, the legend of Antony and Cleopatra, had attracted public attention to Egypt and its products. Many of the most distinguished members of Augustus' party had served in the Egyptian campaign, had stayed for months at Alexandria and lived in the houses of the rich Egyptian lords; their curious eyes had inspected the splendour of the vast

Alexandrine  
art and luxury  
at Rome.

\* Velleius Paterculus, II. lxxxii. 5; Suetonius, *Aug.* 72.

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palaces of the Ptolemies, and they had brought back with them furniture, vases, fabrics and artistic objects. Many had made fortunes from the property of the crown and of Antony; the largest part of Augustus' property, of his family and of his friends, was probably now in Egypt; \* Egypt was the chief source of the new luxury which became fashionable in Italy; many wealthy Romans were obliged to go to Egypt on business from time to time or to send their agents. Contracts between Italy and the old realm of the Ptolemies became more and more frequent; the development of commerce made Puteoli a rich town, and facilitated the introduction to Italy of Egyptian habits, customs and ideas. The result of the conquest was speedily seen in the effects of Egyptian influence upon Roman life; the movement towards Roman tradition and the fashionable nationalism which the crisis of Actium had aroused were now counterbalanced. Many men had contracted in Egypt a great love of art, of luxury and of novelties, which spread by degrees to those Italian citizens who had never seen the realm of the Ptolemies and had made their fortunes or escaped ruin during the revolution.

Alexandrine  
art in the  
Roman house.

Thus, notwithstanding the general profession of admiration for the old Roman simplicity, splendid residences arose in every quarter of Rome, even upon the Esquiline, once the cemetery of the poor, and now covered with fine houses of every size, after Mæcenas had there built his sumptuous dwelling.† After so many perils and emotions it was indeed pleasant to enjoy peace and repose in a magnificent house. Alexandrine art, with its unrivalled refinement, wealth and realism, appeared at the right moment to satisfy this vague longing for novelty and elegance, and stimulated every taste in this direction. The masters of the world welcomed the movement; they prepared to transport from the metropolis of the Ptolemies to their own

\* We have already stated in vol. iv. that Augustus and Mæcenas had property in Egypt. Josephus (XIX. v. 1) tells us that Antonia, the mother of Drusus, had an overseer in Egypt; she must therefore have held considerable property in the country. This was no doubt part of the fortune accumulated by Antony in Egypt; Dion (li. 15) tells us that the daughter of Antony and Octavianus received χρήματα ἐπὶ τῶν πατρῶων.

† Horace, *Sat.* I. viii. 14; *Carm.* III. xxix. 10.



homes all the beauties invented by centuries of laborious toil for the rich lords of Egypt. The walls of their lofty halls were arranged in panels framed in garlands, winged Loves and masques; Alexandrine painters then depicted scenes from Homer, from Theocritus or from mythology; others designed some of those Dionysiac scenes which were highly popular in the Egypt of the Ptolemies; others, again, like the famous Ludius, painted little *genre* pictures in which the refinements of art and the beauties of nature were skilfully combined; hills and plains were to be seen diversified by villas, summer-houses, towers, porticoes, colonnades and terraces, shaded by lofty palm-trees and spreading pines, traversed by streams with little single-arched bridges, and peopled by men and women gaily walking and talking. In the house of Livia on the Palatine or in the museum of the Baths of Diocletian were several masterpieces of this decorative painting; their elegant refinement was tinged with a vague eroticism, which became obscenity in the more retired rooms of the house. Other artists worked in stucco upon the arches, and marvellous remnants of their labours can be seen in the museum of Diocletian's Baths; here again they modelled *genre* pictures, the same ingenious landscapes and the same Bacchic scenes on the uniform whiteness of the stucco, and produced their effects, not by colouring, but by the unequalled lightness and vivacity of their touch. Every little picture was framed in graceful ornamentation, arabesques, creepers and Loves, dragons running into arabesques, and winged Victories on tiptoe. Alexandrine sculptors also inlaid the walls with precious marble; Alexandrine mosaic-workers wrought marvellous designs upon the pavements; and the decorations again were composed of Alexandrine productions, rich hangings, magnificent glassware, cups of onyx and of myrrh.\*

In these decorated homes the Graces stood around the master to charm his eye at every moment with some fair landscape, some beautiful ornament, some gracious figure in the nude; their paintings, their stucco-work, their marble was magnifi-

Incompatibility  
of this art with  
family life.

\* I have drawn the details of this description from the fine work of Courbaud, *Le Bas-relief romain à représentations historiques*, Paris, 1899, p. 344 ff.

26 B.C. cent, their furniture costly, their paintings of the loves of Venus and of Bacchus often sensual and obscene ; was it possible that such houses could become the holy precincts of that old patriarchal system, with its austere duties and occupations, which everybody professed anxiety to reconstruct ? The architecture of the house is, in every period, an index to the nature of society. Amid these painted Graces no refuge could be found for the traditional love, which was merely the civic duty of perpetuating the race in lawful wedlock ; they would harmonise only with the new love, the love of intellectual civilisation refined by a thousand artifices, which was nothing more than the selfish enjoyment of mind and body. In these magnificent dwellings was concluded an evolution which had transformed the family within four centuries and changed the strength and rigidity of a despotic organisation into the freest form of sexual union ever seen in western civilisation, comparable rather to that free love which some modern socialists regard as the marriage of the future. Rites and formalities were no longer necessary ; marriage depended upon mutual consent, a certain level of moral dignity, and, in Roman phrase, upon "marital affection" ; it could be dissolved for incompatibility of temper, mutual indifference or unworthy conduct. The only outward and visible sign of the union, though even this was rather a matter of habit than a legal necessity, was the dowry. If a man took a free woman of honourable family to live with him, the act made them man and wife and their children legitimate ; if the marriage state proved displeasing, they separated and the marriage was dissolved. Such, in its essential features, was marriage in the age of Augustus. Henceforward in the family the woman was almost entirely free and equal to the man. Of her old eternal tutelage nothing remained but her obligation to be supported by a guardian when she had no father or husband and wished to make a contract or a will, to begin a lawsuit or sell a *res mancipi*. Considered as such, there was a certain grandeur and nobility in this form of marriage ; but it marked the downfall of family life, since the women of the upper classes had lost the old feminine virtues of modesty, obedience, industry and self-



respect.\* Their moral laxity is expressed in the words of the poet who wishes death to those who "collect the green emeralds and dye white wool with the purple of Tyre," because "these things arouse young women to covet silken vestments and the bright shells of the Red Sea." †

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Unwritten law had enforced marriage upon the *pater familias* of former times as a duty, because both custom and law admitted his full control of all family property, and his almost despotic power over the members of his family; the unfortunate husband in the days of Augustus was but the shadow and caricature of the old Roman *pater familias* with his terrible austerity. Power he had none, except that of squandering part of the dowry, especially if he happened to marry a cunning and overbearing wife, protected by high birth and by many friends and admirers. He could no longer force her to bear children and to bring them up; he could not even oppose her ruinous caprices or insist upon her fidelity. Women had acquired entire liberty, even that of adultery; the law did not venture to usurp the rights of the *pater familias*, and the punishment of an adulteress was a matter for the domestic tribunal, which no one would venture to convoke amid the general collapse of family life. It was, moreover, impossible to punish adultery with death, and the culprit could easily procure a divorce and escape such lighter penalties inflicted by the family as banishment from the city. Thus, apart from a few idealists, marriage was no longer undertaken from patriotic motives as a matter of necessity, but either to secure possession of beauty, of a rich dowry or alliance with a powerful family. If the union proved disappointing, divorce immediately followed; some attempted to console themselves by a change of wife, as a servant may be changed at the present day; others remained unmarried or took a freedwoman for their concubine.

The decay of marriage.

\* We may notice the apparently exceptional nature of the praises addressed to the women in what is usually known as the eulogy of Turia. C. I. L. vi. 1527, v. 30-31: *domestica bona pudicitiae, obsequii, comitatis, facilitatis, lanificii assiduitatis, religionis sine superstitione, ornatus non conspicui, cultus modici.*

† Tibullus II. iv. 27 ff.

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These unions were not considered legal or the children of them legitimate; this was a further advantage for the father, who could adopt the children he preferred and give them his name.\* The association of a few rich people with a large number whose means were scanty and who were attracted by the growth of luxury led to yet further degradation. Women from equestrian or senatorial families with little wealth, who had married senators or knights equally poor, were enlisted, with their husbands' consent, in a sort of counter-revolutionary movement, working to recover from the millionaires of Rome, by means of their smiles, part of the property of which the revolution had deprived them. Notwithstanding their affection for tradition, the upper classes looked with an indulgent eye upon this fashionable prostitution, from which some gained pleasure and others money. Under the old law the husband might punish adultery by killing the wife and her lover, but it was a practice which now became lucrative for many knights and senators, while the number of women whose affections were for sale increased rapidly.†

The decline of  
the birth-rate.

Great indeed was the fall of that nobility which had long been above suspicion and contempt. One of the most sceptical poets of the age seems to have felt a moment's pain and horror at the sight of the Roman nobility fallen from the height of proud and imperious virtue to the baseness of this refined prostitution; he represents the door of an illustrious house as relating this obscure but terrible tragedy in Roman history in phrases which cannot be read without emotion, though the poet

\* Bouché-Leclercq, "Les lois démographiques d'Auguste," in the *Revue historique*, 1885, vol. 57, ii. p. 228.

† The following is a list of passages from the poets of the age which allude to this degradation and utter their imprecations against venal love: Horace, *Odes* III. vi. 29; Tibullus, I. iv. 59 (this passage refers more particularly to *pæderastia*), I. v. 47 ff., I. viii. 29 ff., II. iii. 49 ff., II. iv. (the whole elegy), I. 7; Propertius, I. viii. 33 ff.; Ovid, *Am.* I. 8, I. 10, III. viii. 3, III. xii. 10; *Ars Amat.* ii. 161 ff., ii. 275 ff. It is hardly probable that a subject so often repeated in so many different ways with precise and realistic details should be purely conventional or a matter of literary imitation. Some exaggeration in these descriptions there may have been; but they must have been based upon facts. We shall see that the *lex Julia de adulteriis* attempted to punish this disgraceful traffic.



attempts to maintain his habitual tone of jest. "I who long ago was open," says the door, "for great triumphs, I whose threshold has been crossed by so many gilded cars, I who have been bathed by the tears of so many prisoners and suppliants, now groan throughout the night under the blows of men who quarrel before me and under the unworthy hands which strike me. Every day I am decorated with infamous garlands, and at my feet I see the torches left by the lover who has not found admission. I can no longer guard the nights of a woman unduly famous, I whose glory has been debased by obscenity. Alas! this great dame takes no thought for my honour, and would be yet more dissolute than the age in which we live." \* Granted that there were still large families in Italy, no member of the little Roman oligarchy, which professed anxiety for the restoration of tradition, set any example of the kind; Augustus and Agrippa had but one daughter respectively; Marcus Crassus, the son of the millionaire triumvir, had but one son; Mæcenas had no children, nor had Lucius Cornelius Balbus, who was a bachelor; Marcus Silanus had two children, Messala, Asinius and Statilius Taurus had three. The families of seven or eight children, once numerous were no longer to be found; men thought that their duties to the republic had been fulfilled with a family of one or two, and many people attempted to avoid even this humble duty. Anxiety for Rome's future greatness was obviously diminishing in the poorer families of the upper classes. Women, instead of praying Isis and Ilithyia for a numerous family, felt neither shame nor fear in avoiding their obligations by any and every means,

. . . ut careat rugarum crimine venter.†

In place of marriage men found greater security and pleasure in the joys of a mistress chosen from the great ladies or freedwomen, from Syrian singers, Greek and Spanish dancers, young and attractive slaves of Germany and Thrace; or, again, men turned to the youths who had been corrupted to

\* Propertius, I. xvi. 1 ff.

† See the two elegies of Ovid, which may be described as of terrible simplicity: *Amor.* ii. 13 and 14.

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serve the pleasures of the masters of the world. Selfish and sterile love or unnatural lust, which the ancient Romans had driven with loathing from their midst, now became social or literary commonplaces, and this at a time when admiration for the past was loudly proclaimed. Two famous poets, the favourites of the great, Tibullus, who enjoyed the patronage of Messala, and Propertius, the friend of Mæcenas, then gave final perfection of form to an erotic poetry which was to prove a most disastrous influence upon ancient society and its morality. It was a poetry which used Greek metres as a vehicle for the psychological exposition of sensual love; the matter of it was drawn partly from Greek sources, partly from individual experience. Refined and tender, if occasionally stilted and artificial, these two poets delighted to describe the visible or hidden beauties of their mistresses, to analyse their recollection of past favours or their hope of pleasures to come, to express the intoxicating charm of mutual enjoyment or the devastating fury of jealousy, to weave the stories of Greek mythology into their intrigues or to fortify their narratives with detailed illustrations of contemporary manners. Both poets, while undermining the old morality of family life, were working with no less unconscious energy for the overthrow of the old military system.

Anti-  
militarism.

In the name of the god Eros, Propertius and Tibullus began this anti-militarism, which was to be continued for three centuries from different points of view, and by very numerous writers, including Christian authors, until the empire was delivered helpless to the barbarians. "You find your delight, Messala, in war by sea and land, to display your trophies in your house, but I am enchained by the caresses of a fair child." \* "He was a man of iron, Oh fair one, who preferred war and booty to yourself." † Tibullus sings the praises of simplicity, and the peace and virtue of a country life, but thinks with emotion and regret of the golden age when men were good and happy, and curses the impure desires of his own time. But these praises are actuated by motives far different from those upon which the military and conservative party then relied

\* Tibullus, I. i. 53 ff.

† Tibullus, I. ii. 65 ff.



for their own purposes. The latter were anxious to correct morality and to restore the old simplicity of life, in order to bring back a generation of bold warriors, and regarded war as a hardening school. Tibullus, on the other hand, regards war, cupidity and luxury as scourges originating from one source and as equally detestable, for one invariably accompanies the other. "How happy was man under the reign of Saturn.\* . . . There were then no armies, no hatred and no war; the shameful art of the cruel smith had not forged the sword;† the first forger of that terrible sword was a barbarian, a man of iron heart, who unchained the furies of war and massacre and shortened the road to death. But no," cries the poet, "it is not the fault of that wretch; rather is it our fault who turn upon ourselves the steel which was given for our defence against wild beasts. Gold is to blame. There was no war when men drank from wooden cups.‡ . . . Ye Lares, turn from my breast the brazen arrow.§ . . . Give me but such love, and let others go to war.|| . . . What madness to run upon one's death!¶ How praiseworthy is he whom painless old age surprises amid his children in a humble dwelling.\*\* . . . May peace go forth and fertilise our lands. Peace first bent beneath the yoke the neck of oxen for the plough. Peace first cultivated the vine and pressed the sweetness from the grape, that the son might drink the wine laid down by the father. In peace the ploughshare and the hoe are seen to shine, while the sword grows rusty."††

This love thus shrinks from death and from the sword, seeks a retreat in the depths of populous towns and in lonely countryside, is fed by sensual pleasures and sentimental longings, and is invoked by Tibullus in the first elegy of his beautiful second book almost as one of his household gods and is placed among the tutelary deities of the family which it sterilises! He conceives that Venus alone can tame the ferocity which has brought the rapine and slaughter of civil war into the world

The effeminacy  
of Tibullus and  
Propertius.

\* Tibullus, II. iii. 35.

† Tibullus, II. x. 1 ff.

|| Tibullus, I. x. 29.

\*\* Tibullus, I. x. 39.

† Tibullus, I. iii. 47.

§ Tibullus, I. x. 25.

¶ Tibullus, I. x. 33.

†† Tibullus, I. x. 45.

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of his time ; the passion of love seems to him the means to purify and regenerate the perversions and corruptions of his age.\* With less sentimentality, but greater passion, Propertius boasts of what any old Roman would have scorned, his renunciation of glory, war and power for the love of a woman ; † he is happy in the fame which his love for her has brought him, and declares that he wishes no other renown than that of a love-poet.‡ He cries that he can rise to the heights of heaven now that Cynthia has been given to him,§ and he affirms that nothing can equal a night spent with her.|| “What would life be to me without thee ? Thou alone art my family, my country, my unique and eternal joy.”¶ He represents the door of the illustrious patrician house as lamenting the decadence of its great inhabitant. He represents it also as softened by the tears of a lover who has not yet been able “to open it with gifts.”

Religion as  
modified by  
Greek  
influence.

This poetry was admired, and its authors were patronised by the men who should have worked to restore traditional virtue. Inconsistency, however, was supreme. War and administration were to be once more the sole occupation of the great, and yet senators and knights were infected with the taste for every pleasure which the old nobility had scorned. What ancient Roman, for instance, would ever have condescended to appear upon the stage ? \*\* The theatre had fascinated the grandchildren of the conquerors of the world, though they had acted many another drama upon vaster scenes and before a larger public. Temples and sanctuaries were repaired throughout Rome, new temples were built, and the old religious ceremonial was restored with minute attention to ritual ; but the spirit of Latin religion was struggling in its death-throes amid the Greek art which now adorned the sacred sites. The old Roman worship had been a stern self-discipline, pre-

\* Tibullus, II. iii. 35 ; *Ferrea non Venerem, sed prædam, sæcula laudant.*

† Propertius, I. vi. 29.

‡ Propertius, I. vii. 9.

§ Propertius, I. viii. 43.

|| Propertius, I. xiv. 9.

¶ Propertius, I. xi. 22.

\*\* Several measures were taken at this time to forbid the art of acting to citizens of the upper classes.



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paring men for the most painful duties of private and public life ; but the austere gods which symbolised the vital principles of this discipline were out of place in such sumptuous marble temples as that of Apollo, inaugurated by Augustus in 28 ; their character was hidden beneath the names of Greek divinities, and like these they were represented in beautiful sculptures in the nude. Greek polytheism came from the same source as Roman polytheism, and was based upon the same ideas and the same myths, but had run a wholly diverse course of development ; it was not the moral principles restraining passion that were idealised, but human longing for physical and intellectual pleasure. To present a religion of morality under the forms of a religion of pleasure was an inconsistency, but current admiration for Greek mythology and its literary and artistic productions was now too profound in Italy. The Romans themselves could not endure a religion without art.

These strange and manifold inconsistencies are comprehended in one general antagonism in which Italy was involved at the close of the civil war, and in which she was to struggle for a whole century, the antagonism between the Latin principle and the Greek oriental principle of social life, between the State considered as an instrument of rule and as an instrument of refined civilisation, between Roman militarism and Asiatic culture. This antagonism must be comprehended if we are to understand the history of the first century of the empire. Admiration for the Roman past was not, as many historians have supposed, a sentimental anachronism, but a necessity. If the old Roman State was anything, it was a complex system of traditions, ideas, institutions, and laws, whose sole purpose was to overcome the selfishness of the individual whenever this conflicted with public interest, and to force every one, from senator to peasant, to work for the good of the State, even at the sacrifice of his most precious possessions, his family affection, his pleasure, his fortune, or even his life. Italy realised that this powerful instrument of conquest was now required for the defence and government of the empire which her armies had conquered ; she realised the need for prudent statesmen, far-sighted diplomats, enlightened administrators, brave soldiers and zealous

The inconsistency of Greek and Latin civilisation.

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citizens ; she realised also that these could only be produced if the traditions and institutions of the State were preserved. Though the project was somewhat Utopian, it was none the less necessary. It was, however, not merely for the defence of the empire that Italy desired a strong government ; she also wished to enjoy the empire, to satisfy the universal demand for greater refinement, for the more sensual artistic and philosophic culture which the east had brought forth, and which stimulated all that individual selfishness which the Latin State attempted to restrain or to suppress. Græco-Asiatic civilisation impeded the restoration of Latin tradition, which was demanded as the salvation of the empire ; yet every one, or nearly every one, wished to save the empire in order that Italy might assimilate this Græco-Asiatic culture. Such, in broad outline, was the hopeless antagonism in which Italy was struggling ; an antagonism eventually increased by Cleopatra's policy and the conquest of Egypt, which had stirred the traditional spirit on one side and the taste for orientalism on the other ; an antagonism which brought confusion into private and political life, into religion and literature, and became the subject of the marvellous poem now composed by Horace. In inimitable verse of polished beauty Horace has left a striking testimony to the reality of this decisive crisis, which recurs periodically in the history of every civilisation to which Athens and Rome had given birth. Horace had sung the praises of the great conservative reaction which all had recognised as necessary after Actium, and his magnificent series of Alcaic and Sapphic odes, appealing both to the national and religious instincts, had admirably idealised the aristocratic society of earlier times. But neither by temperament, nor by inclination, nor by ambition was he a national poet, as Augustus would doubtless have made him ; nor, again, was he a court poet, as misinterpreters have wished to regard him. This freedman's son, with eastern blood perhaps in his veins, a southerner born in Apulia, a bilingual and semi-Greek province, a subtle thinker and artist in language, had but one object : he strove to study, to observe and to depict the world before him, to understand and analyse the laws of the ideal world ;



his philosophical spirit was not of a nature to appreciate the grandeur of Roman tradition, for he was too artistic, too practical and too politic. Though he sang the great traditions of Rome, he was so unacquainted with her history that in one of his odes he speaks of Carthage as destroyed by Scipio Africanus, whom he confuses with Scipio Æmilianus.\* His age, his studies, a certain discontent with life and his pleasure in his own work urged him to live in retirement as far as possible, in the country, far from Rome, from his friends and patrons. He shrank from public recitation, and saw little of the dilettanti of literature, the ignoramuses who were the professors and critics of those days. His visits to his great friends became less frequent, and many began to regard him as proud, since he would only submit his poetry to such great personages as Augustus and Mæcenæ; † they, again, regarding the rarity of his appearance, almost accused him of ingratitude.‡ Under such conditions it was difficult for him to become a national poet and to devote himself entirely to the task of encouraging by his poetry the great traditional movement. At the same time he could not remain inactive. He was then at the age of thirty-nine, in full possession of his powers, admired, and sufficiently wealthy to be beyond anxiety for the present or for the future; he had studied and travelled, had witnessed a great revolution, and now found himself at the centre of the conflicting streams of ideas and interests which met at Rome, in an age when men's minds were agitated by questions of vast importance. Notwithstanding his habitual seclusion, his taste for the country and for the life of a solitary thinker, he had every opportunity for observing the society which governed the empire, and in which the seeds of future development were already germinating.

Horace could discuss the evils of the time and their best remedies with Augustus, with Agrippa and with Mæcenæ; to his ear came the current gossip of high society, its festivities,

The Odes of  
Horace.

\* *Odes* IV. viii. 17. These lines have been considered as an interpolation, but I see no reason for thus regarding them.

† Horace, *Ep.* I. xix. 37.

‡ See Suet., *Horat. Vita*, and Horace, *Ep.* I. 7.

26 B.C. its scandals, and the quarrels of young men and courtesans. He watched the efforts to restore the old worship of the gods and admired the new houses which Alexandrine artists were decorating for the masters of the world. He saw the rise and growth of Roman luxury and pleasure maintained by Egyptian money, while on every side he heard execrations of the avarice and corruption of the day. In short, he had all the material that any great writer could require for a great work. Horace, indeed, conceived a great project; he wished to create a school of Latin lyric poetry which was to be as varied as Greek lyric poetry in metre and subject-matter; he wished to be the Pindar and Anacreon, the Alcæus and the Bacchylides of Italy, and to use every form of metre to express every aspect of that life which passed beneath his eyes. By degrees the masterpiece took shape in the poet's mind, as the thousand incidents of the intense social life at Rome suggested comparisons, thoughts and feelings, and recalled to his memory the lines or stanzas of Greek poets; with these suggestions rose the idea of a short lyric composition, for which he adopted now one and now another of the Greek metres. By degrees, with his habitual thought and care, between journeys, festivities and readings he composed the eighty-eight lyric pieces contained in the first three books of the Odes. His poems were not remarkable, like those of Catullus, for their passionate warmth; they were, on the contrary, carefully elaborated in every thought and stanza, in every line and word; the suggestions, the ideas, and the comparisons which he adopted from Alcæus, Sappho, Bacchylides, Simonides, Pindar and Anacreon were chosen with the greatest thought; Greek mythology was a source which he constantly used with much dexterity. The result was a body of lyric poetry which aimed at perfection of style and attempted beneath a variety of subjects to treat one unique theme, and which, though it is not immediately apparent, has a true unity of its own. To read and admire the Odes as separate compositions is to miss their full meaning. If this finest and most polished production of Latin literature is to be understood it must be read as a whole; we must observe how the theme of one ode corresponds with that of another or contradicts it, and attempt to discover the



invisible thread which holds the pearls of the necklace together. This thread, this general theme running through the whole work, is the piteous confusion in which the spirit of Roman life was then struggling, a confusion to which the poet's attention is constantly drawn, though he has no hope, and apparently no desire, to suggest a solution.

It was after conversations with Augustus, Agrippa or Mæcenas that the poet composed the famous civil or religious odes in which the magnificent Sapphic or Alcaic stanzas evoke the past history of Rome and the long tradition of private and public virtue which had strengthened her citizens throughout the ages. Sometimes he enumerates the gods and heroes of Greece and the illustrious names of Roman history; he recalls Paulus Æmilius "surrendering his great soul to the triumphant Carthaginians," the glory of the Marcelli, the courageous death of Cato and the splendid destiny of the Julii, who were at length to rejoice over the re-establishment of peace throughout the world under the reign of Jupiter, represented upon earth by Augustus.\* Again he bursts into admiration of the virtues of the aristocracy, which are not the sport of popular favour, like the glory of the ambitious; † the thought of the soldiers of Crassus, who took wives in Persia and forgot the temple of Vesta, recalls the simple and sublime household of the legendary Atilius Regulus.‡ In noble metaphors he remembers how the youth which "stained the sea with Carthaginian blood" had been brought up amid the austerities of family life, uncorrupted by the vices of a criminal age.§ Thus the poet raises a magnificent memorial in the classical style to the legendary grandeur of aristocratic society. But the pinnacles and cornices of this monument were to become the resting-place of other inspirations, celebrating love, wine and banqueting. On leaving the patrician houses and their eulogies of the past, Horace found a joyful company of his young friends, whose one thought, now that peace had returned, was to enjoy the wealth acquired in the kingdom of the Ptolemies, who loved the leisure of their villas, the delights of their feasts, their women and their amusements.

The unity of  
the Odes.

\* I. 12.

† III. 2, 17 ff.

‡ III. 5.

§ III. 6, 33 ff.

26 B.C. In lighter stanzas and the more flexible of Greek metres the poet sends invitations to his friends or asks them to give him a meal; with comical exaggeration he interrupts a company flushed with wine, begging one of them to reveal the name of his fair one.\* In vivid colouring, with wealth of mythological detail, he paints little erotic scenes marked by sentimentality, sensuality or irony. He jestingly reproaches Lydia because she has inspired Sybaris with such passion that he has become invisible to his friends; † elsewhere he paints in burning words the torments of jealousy; ‡ again he invites Tyndaris, with graceful pictures of country life, to withdraw to a remote valley in the Sabine territory, where Faunus plays his pipe, and there to flee the heat of the dog-star and the insolent Cyrus, with his violence.§ Again he tells his love of Glycera, "whose body shines with purer white than the marble of Paros." || One day, when walking alone and unarmed in the woods, thinking of Lalage, he meets a wolf, and the wolf runs away. Horace draws a strange conclusion from the incident: love gives man a certain sanctity, and the lover is pure. Therefore whatever may happen,

Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,  
Dulce loquentem.¶

Other women and other lovers meet us in rapid succession. Chloe runs away like a fawn frightened by the uproar of the wind; \*\* young men knock despondingly at the door which Lydia has suddenly closed upon them; †† we see the lover dominated by a greedy and cunning slave-woman; ‡‡ a youth, in love with a girl not yet of age, to whom the poet in complicated metaphor gives wise and ironical advice, telling him that he is mistaken to wish for "unripe grapes"; §§ we see the fair courtesan Barine, the terror of mothers and fathers and of young wives, whose vows provoke the poet to laughter. He affirms with mock solemnity that perjury is admissible in love.

Ridet hoc, inquam, Venus ipsa, rident  
Simplices Nymphæ, ferus et Cupido. |||

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\* I. 27.

|| I. 18, 6.

‡‡ II. 4.

† I. 8.

¶ I. 22.

§§ II. 5.

‡ I. 13.

\*\* I. 23.

||| II. 8.

§ I. 17.

†† I. 25.



Asterie waiting for Gyges, who is forced to be absent during the winter, and finding consolation with her neighbour Enipeus, is the subject of a little picture drawn, as usual, with ironical details from mythology.\* Then we have a graceful dialogue between lovers who quarrel and rouse one another to jealousy, with their final reconciliation.† We meet with prayers addressed to hard-hearted mistresses. Here the poet prefers an ironical touch, as in his prayer to Mercury, in which he says that as Mercury can "lead after him the tigers in the forests" he should also be able to tame so cruel a lady, and he then proceeds to relate with wilful exaggeration the story of the Danaids.‡ With similar playfulness he concludes his erotic poems, comparing himself to an old soldier in the army of love who, "after fighting not ingloriously," hangs up his arms in the temple of Venus; he then proceeds to invoke the goddess who had delivered him from Chloe.§ Undoubtedly the majority of these little pictures and their characters are derived from Greek poetry and Roman society gossip. In any case, they are external to the poet, who applies his own inventions or the inventions of others to himself. The poetry of Horace, in fact, is not inspired by personal experience of love, like that of Catullus; it is literary, artificial love poetry, written among the author's books at the pleasure of his agile and happy fancy, combining sensuality and irony, fine psychological insight and literary skill; it marks in literature the moral change proceeding in society. Love had been the expression of a citizen's duty to perpetuate his race through the family; it now became personal pleasure, barren of result, the sensation of a moment, a caprice of the imagination, a source of æsthetic pleasure or a subject of pleasantry.

In this way the poet expressed at one time the traditional The civic Odes. philosophy of virtue and at another time the philosophy of pleasure derived from Greek art and contemporary morals. Horace makes no attempt to reconcile these two discordant philosophies; he devotes himself to either in turn, and is satisfied with neither. He realised the strength and grandeur of tradition, but realised also that this great philosophy of

\* III. 7.

† III. 9.

‡ III. 11.

§ III. 26.

26 B.C. duty was unsuited to the weakness of his age and to his own moral frailty; he admits the fact without concealment. In a few lines of a marvellous ode to the goddess of fortune, whose temple was at Antium, he has compressed a bitter philosophy of history and life; fortune, not virtue, is the mistress of the world, and destiny is her humble slave; men and empires are in her power; Augustus starting for distant expeditions trusts to her; to her must men look, though with no great confidence, for a remedy to heal the evils of the time.\* Traditional morality regarded war and politics as the noblest of occupations. Horace does not conceal the fact that they are repugnant to his intellectual egoism, and openly praises civic idleness from time to time. When his friend Iccius was preparing to start for the Arabian war with the hope of bringing back wealth, he addressed an ode to him expressing his surprise that a man inclined to study, "who had promised better," should start once more for war.† In a fine Sapphic ode addressed to Crispus Sallustius, the nephew of the historian, he expresses the Stoic idea which, in spite of its nobility, was absolutely anti-Roman, according to which the only true human domination is not that over material objects, but over the passions of the heart.‡ Thus in his case intellectual selfishness distorts one of the fundamental principles of traditional morality, the worship of simplicity. Horace blames luxury, avarice and greed, and the magnificent buildings which occupy ground required for the plough.§ He contrasts the Romans with the wiser Scythians, who carry their houses upon carts, and with the Getæ, to whom landed property is unknown.|| But his praise of simplicity leads him to a theory of political quietism comparable with that of Tibullus; it is neither wealth, nor honour, nor offices, nor the troubles of political life which bring complete happiness, but health together with study. In his prayer to Apollo the poet asks "to live upon olives, chicory and mallow, to enjoy good health, and to reach an old age of which poetry shall be the honour and the delight."¶ He goes even further, and, breaking entirely

\* I. 35.

§ II. 15.

† I. 29.

|| III. 24, 9.

‡ II. 2.

¶ I. 31, 15 ff.



with Roman tradition, declares in certain odes that the object of life is physical pleasure, and advises the reader to drink and fall in love without delay, as these are the two real pleasures of life; he thus adopts a slothful Epicureanism, from which, however, religious scruples dissuade him from time to time.

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The poet's religion, again, is vague and full of inconsistency. At times, no doubt yielding to the movement for the re-establishment of the old national religion, he declares that he has sailed too long upon the seas of philosophy and will now retrace his course; he then describes the national *Diespiter* in the old style as the god who divides the clouds with his lightning and strikes men with dreadful blows.\* However, his love and admiration of the artistic religion of pleasure and beauty created by the Greeks are too strong. The gods which he invokes are almost invariably those of the Greek Olympus, who are represented as they appeared in sculpture and painting, with the significance and the functions attributed to them by Greek mythology. Thus it is difficult to say what gods Horace believed to hold the government of the world. He speaks of the austere, impersonal and vague divinities of the older tradition, who overwhelmed Italy with misfortune because their temples were falling in ruin. He invokes the symbols of *Pudor*, *Iustitia*, *Fides* and *Veritas*, so dear to the ancient Romans, in verses written upon the death of Quintilius Varus, which most touchingly express the affection of friendship.† There is the Homeric Mercury who saved the poet at the battle of Philippi by shrouding him with a cloud. There is the Faunus whom he invokes in a delightful rustic poem on the nones of December to protect his farm.‡ There are Venus, Cupid and Diana in their Greek forms, and the numberless divinities which Greek polytheism attributed to every natural object, and which could be seen even in the fountain of Bandusium, "in the waters clearer than glass." § It is impossible to say whether the beliefs of Horace amounted to a moral or an æsthetic religion. In his civic poems he sometimes invokes the gods as the supreme governors of the world; in other poems he gives them a share in human actions and events,

The religion of Horace.

\* I. 34, 5.

† I. 24, 6.

‡ III. 18.

§ III. 13.

26 B.C. because their beauty provides him with inspiration for some splendid stanza.

Horace's  
theory of life.

His political and moral views of life being thus inconsistent and his religious views vague, what was the object of life to Horace? It was not public or private virtue, of which he felt incapable, and of which he believed his contemporaries no more capable than himself; it was not physical or intellectual pleasure, for he realised that ruin would result if these were regarded as the sole end of human endeavour; it was not a combination of duty and pleasure, for he cannot understand how life can be divided between these; nor, again, was it servile obedience to the will of the gods, for these are too numerous, too diverse in nature and too contradictory. The natural result of such uncertainty is the intrusion at the extreme limit of this moral vacuum of something which throws its shadow upon every uncertain age, the fear of death. If man cannot persuade himself that the object of life is some ideal, which no one by his own power can ever reach, if life itself is regarded as the sole object of existence, the limitation of that existence brings trouble and sadness. Such sadness it brought to Horace in full measure, and the thought of death is ever before him. The poems which he wrote upon the death of his friends are certainly those in which his sincerity is most outspoken. Life is passing quickly by; death is no respecter of persons: it waits upon all, and all must disappear into nothingness.

Eheu! fugaces, Postume, Postume,  
Labuntur anni. . . \*

These thoughts are represented in forms as diverse as they are admirable, and form a strange contrast to the joyful and voluptuous tone of his poetry, while they infuse his work with a profound and moving melancholy.

The Odes  
as the reflec-  
tion of the  
Augustan age.

Thus this strange body of poems possesses a certain unity arising out of the very inconsistencies of its component parts. To understand these poems is to understand the uncertainties of Augustus and of his political work. No one realised more profoundly than Horace the immense moral vacuum upon



which the vast edifice of the empire rested. What possibility was there of great enterprises when so profound an antagonism poisoned the whole of the national life? How was vigorous work possible when the implements of labour were thus worn and battered? The view of certain historians that the work of Augustus was a mere "political comedy," intended to conceal a monarchy beneath republican forms, is narrow-minded in the extreme. No more tragical endeavour can be conceived than the attempt to reconcile the militarism of ancient Italy and the Greek culture of Asia at a time when the conquest of Egypt had more than ever increased the antagonism between these forces.

26 B.C

## CHAPTER X

### THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL AND THE ÆNEID

Disorder and confusion—The foundation of *Augusta Prætoria Salassorum*—Embassies to Rome—The new tendencies of public feeling—The progress of the puritan movement—The *Æneid*—The fundamental idea of the *Æneid*—The leading figure in the poem—The lower world in the *Æneid*—Horace and Virgil—Eastern complications—Marcellus and Tiberius—The occupations of Augustus at Rome—The expedition to the Yemen—Illness of Augustus—Antonius Musa and the Italian doctors.

Expeditions  
in quest of  
treasure.

THE government which had been re-established in the year 27 was becoming disorganised even in the year 25. Sufficient candidates were not forthcoming to fill the twenty quæstorships vacant in that year; \* though Agrippa inaugurated the Pantheon,† every public department, from the supervision of the roads to the distribution of corn, was no less inefficient than before; the new magistracy of the *præfecti ærarii Saturni* produced no satisfactory result.‡ The provincial governors as a whole brought so little energy to their duties that Augustus will soon be found responsible for the supervision of these offices. When the republic was restored, a certain salary had been allocated to the provincial governors as a stimulus to zeal; the innovation proved useless; the majority took the money, but made no effort to earn it. The Senate was hopelessly lethargic; the members were constantly absent, the debates were marked neither by vigour nor interest, and

\* See Dion, liii. 28.

† Dion, liii. 27.

‡ We shall see that in the year 22 Augustus proposed a further reform of this magistracy; hence the recent reform must have proved inefficacious.



all decisions were left to Augustus, whose measures were approved without opposition.\* Augustus, however, was far away in Spain, and declined responsibility for anything but the finances; silently and almost secretly he continued his petty expeditions with the object of securing a supply of precious metals for the empire. In the spring of that year † Ælius Gallus, an officer of the prefect of Egypt, embarked ten thousand soldiers and a contingent from the king of Judea at the Red Sea, for an expedition in the Yemen at the expense of Egypt. Augustus had arranged this expedition, when he thought he had secured the support of the Nabateans, who inhabited the Syrian frontier and had accepted the Roman protectorate. Shortly afterwards, about the middle of 25, the war against the Cantabrians and Asturians was apparently at an end, and the gold-mines had been recovered. The same year Murena successfully concluded his expedition in the valley of the Salassi; by a mean stratagem he had captured

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\* In fact, we shall see that in the following years numerous senatorial reforms were undertaken with the object of rousing senators from their lethargy.

† I feel no doubt that Ælius Gallus began his expedition about the end of the spring of 25 B.C. Josephus (A. J. XV. ix. 3) tells us that the expedition took place in the thirteenth year of Herod's reign—that is, between the spring of 25 and the spring of 24. Strabo (XVII. i. 54) tells us that while Gallus was in Arabia the Ethiopians invaded Egypt, that Petronius hastened to repulse them, and sent a thousand prisoners to Augustus *νεωστὶ ἐκ Καντάβρων ἤκοντι*. Now we shall see that Augustus returned to Rome during the first half of the year 24. It was therefore during the winter of 25–24 that Petronius returned to Alexandria after his campaign against the Ethiopians, which consequently took place during the autumn of 25. Hence during the autumn of 25 Ælius Gallus was out of Egypt; but Strabo (XVI. iv. 24) tells us that when Ælius Gallus reached Leucecome he was obliged to spend the summer and winter there in tending invalid soldiers. This was the summer and winter of 25, as he was out of Egypt during the autumn of 25, as we have seen. He therefore started towards the end of the spring, as Josephus says, with his usual accuracy. We have an additional proof from Dion (liii. 29), who gives a narrative of the expedition of the year 24. Strabo's account shows us that the most important part of the expedition took place in 24. After spending the winter of 25–24 at Leucecome for the benefit of his invalid soldiers, Gallus began his march at the beginning of the spring of 24; he spent six months on his advance and two on his return (XVI. xiv. 24); he had therefore returned towards the end of 24, and the expedition proper therefore falls within that year.



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and enslaved the military members of the population; \* he then began the foundation of a Roman colony, *Augusta Prætoria Salassorum*, the modern Aosta. Finally, probably towards the end of this year, Augustus imposed upon the Alpine peoples in Gaul, Dalmatia and Pannonia, through a senatorial decree, the new tributes which Licinus had arranged, and which doubtless included a land tax; upon Gaul at least was imposed the famous *quadragesima Galliarum*, an impost of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. upon all imported merchandise.† Even if these little

\* Strabo, IV. vi. 7; Suetonius, *Aug.* 21; Dion, liii. 25. According to Beloch, Varro cannot possibly have taken thirty-six thousand prisoners; nor does it seem possible that the valley of Aosta could support so large a population at the present day—at any rate, under normal conditions. At the same time it must be remembered that this valley had been for years a refuge for exiles who lived upon brigandage, and that the population might thus have increased beyond its normal limits.

† Saint Jerome, *ad ann. Abrah.* 1992 (25 B.C.): *Augustus Calabriam [sic] et Gallos vectigales fecit; Chronicon Paschale*, i. p. 365 (Bonn): *Αὔγουστος Καῖσαρ Καλαβρίαν καὶ Γαλάτας ὑποφόρους ἐποίησεν*; G. Syncellus, i. p. 592 (Bonn): *Αὔγουστος Γαλάταις φόρους ἔθετο*. It seems to me certain that the *Γαλάται* to whom reference is here made are the Transalpine Gauls, and not the Galatians of Asia. Saint Jerome speaks of *Gallos*, and not *Galatas*, which is an argument of some value. In fact, as has been pointed out by Perrot, *De Galatia Provincia Romana*, Lutetiae Parisiorum, 1867, pp. 34–35, from the first century of the Empire Latin writers speak of the European Gauls as *Galli* and the Asiatic Gauls as *Galati*. This argument is finally confirmed by Saint Jerome himself and by Syncellus, who distinguishes the imposition of this tribute upon the Gauls from the reduction of Galatia to a Roman province, which took place in the following year. We find a few lines further on in Saint Jerome, *ad ann. Abrah.* 1993: *M. Lollius Galatiam Romanam provinciam facit*. Syncellus, vol. i. p. 592 (Bonn): *Λόλλιος Μάρκος Ρωμαίοις Γαλατίαν ἐπεκτέσασατο*. The *Chronicon Paschale* does not mention the reduction of Galatia to a province; hence it seems to me that the Gauls upon whom the tribute of the year 25 was laid, according to Saint Jerome, are not the same people as the Galatians who became Roman subjects in the following year, and that we have here to deal with two different transactions; in the first case tribute was laid upon a population already subject, and in the second case upon an allied people reduced to subjection. The first is a financial and the second a political measure. Moreover, Saint Jerome and the *Chronicon Paschale* mention together with these people subjected to tribute in 25, another people, the *Calabres*. This is an obvious mistake, as Calabria formed part of Italy; but the mistake itself shows that the measure was financial and had nothing to do with the annexation of Asiatic Galatia, which was an isolated measure. During those years no nation was annexed to the empire at the same time as the Galatians. Who then were the people who were subjected to tribute at the same



military expeditions and minor financial reforms had brought the much-desired shower of gold, the resulting enthusiasm would not have allayed the vague uneasiness arising from the domestic confusion in Italy. After the conclusion of the civil war the name of Rome became formidable in the person of its new chief and embassies arrived from every quarter. The Scythians inhabiting the steppes of Southern Russia sent an embassy to Augustus in Spain, and the ambassadors of an Indian king also came to Spain to pay their respects to the successor of the Ptolemies and the governor of Egypt, with which country Indian commerce was considerable.\* All these honours were very flattering to the national pride of Italy, but were again inadequate to appease popular discontent.

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The nation was beginning to realise that the re-establishment of the republic, decided with such enthusiasm and hopes a few years previously, had been no more than a necessary but deceptive expedient. The horrors of the last revolution had produced a reaction restoring power and authority to the historic aristocracy; but this class was decimated by poverty, stricken by war, crushed by the catastrophes of the last twenty years, and enervated by the new spirit of self-indulgence and of indolence, which the conquest of Egypt had greatly stimulated, and which Tibullus expressed in plaintive elegies. Even with the help of the most intelligent, the most vigorous and the richest men of the revolutionary party, the aristocracy was unable to restore its shattered fortunes. Almost without

The state of public opinion.

time as the Gauls? Here we are reduced to conjecture and may, for example, read *Dalmatas*. Heavy imposts must have been laid at this time upon Dalmatia, as the country revolted a few years later in exasperation at the weight of the burden. Finally, as we have said in note,\* p. 157, it should be remembered that the only plausible explanation of Augustus' journey to Gaul in 27, and of the census which he then ordered, is his plan for increasing Gallic taxation, and it will become obvious that the simple words of Saint Jerome mention the fact and the date of this event in Roman financial history, which was to have such important consequences in the history of the world. It is obvious that the ancient historians themselves realised this importance, as the memory of it became so permanent that Saint Jerome noted it in his *Chronology*. I have therefore assumed that at the same time an increase was made in the tribute recently laid upon the Pannonians and the Alpine populations, who were soon to revolt for that reason.

\* Orosius, 6, 21, 19-21.



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exception the nobles were devoted solely to self-indulgence. Some imitated Mæcenæ, who had married the beautiful Terentia and had retired to private life. Others thought rather of enriching themselves than of conducting public business. Others, again, devoted their energies to literature, as did Pollio and Messala, wrote histories of the civil war or their own memoirs, and regarded Rome as a convenient centre for their work. In the universal collapse of political forces the aristocracy had lost all capacity for government; at the same time it had recovered sufficient strength to hamper the organisation of a government repugnant to its prejudices and its pride, by which the honours and advantages of power would be transferred to other classes. The popular party had disappeared or was extinct; a few senators, such as Egnatius Rufus, Murena and Fannius Cæpio, attempted its restoration, but in vain.\* Although Cæsar's son was at the head of the state, the great leaders of the conservative party, Brutus, Cassius, and especially Pompey, had become the objects of universal admiration. When Titius, the officer of Antony, who had killed Sextus Pompeius, was recognised one day in the theatre of Pompey, he was driven out by the public.† So great was the new prestige which the aristocracy enjoyed that Augustus preferred to leave the state departments in confusion rather than to hurt their feelings; he even reproached Rufus for saving the houses of the poor from fire without the authorisation of the nobility, and contented himself with advising the ædiles to show more zeal in the performance of their duties.‡ Zeal, however, was not encouraged; witness the case of Rufus, whose energy had brought down upon him the hatred of the

\* The common idea that under Augustus there were no political agitations is a mistake. The episodes of Rufus, Fannius, and of Cæpio showed that there were men who attempted by intrigue to deprive the great nobles and Augustus himself of their influence over the *comitia*. I conceive that these men were working to revive the traditions of the popular party, and rely upon one consideration and upon one fact for my opinion. The fact is that the aristocracy, as may be seen from Velleius Paterculus, vigorously opposed these movements; the consideration is that the re-establishment of the republic must have given a certain force to democratic tradition.

† Velleius Paterculus, II. lxxix. 6.

‡ Dion, liii. 24.



restored aristocracy, while Augustus himself would not venture to shield him. The situation was ridiculous, but improvement seemed difficult. For the moment Augustus confined himself to arranging that the work of Roman administration should be extended no further. In that year some arrangement of affairs was necessary in Mauretania, which had been without a king for six years; Augustus did not propose to make a province of the country, but to give it to Juba, king of Numidia, who was to become king of Mauretania, and to marry Cleopatra Selene, the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra.\*

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Disillusionment and exasperation led to a general agitation throughout Italy. Political opposition to the government there was none, for the popular party had disappeared beyond hope of recall. Complaints and dissatisfaction were directed to accelerating the movement towards moral and social reform to which the last revolution had given rise, and which was gradually extending throughout the State. Experience had revealed even to the dullest minds the truth of Horace's question,

The rise of the  
Puritan  
movement.

Quid leges sine moribus  
Vanæ proficiunt?

It was clear that the re-establishment of the republic was useless unless the old republican morality could also be restored. Search was therefore made on every side for means to remedy the universal deterioration. Among the upper classes, who were under the influence of Greek thought, much was expected from the study of moral philosophy. Epicureanism, the materialist and atheistic system, lost much of the favour which it had enjoyed in Cæsar's time; the public showed a growing preference for the severer morality professed by such systems as Stoicism, for doctrines which attempted to penetrate the mysteries of existence after death, a subject then wholly vague both in popular belief and philo-

\* Dion, liii. 26; Strabo, XVII. iii. 7. As regards the contradiction in the two texts and discussion upon the subject, see Bouché Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, Paris, 1904, ii. p. 363, note 1. However, a passage in Dion (li. 15) inclines us to think that the marriage did not take place until 30 B.C.

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sophical theory, or for doctrines which laid down that the inequalities of this life would find compensation in the next. Such a system was Pythagoreanism, or, more accurately, certain doctrines attributed to this legendary philosopher; in these, the ideas of different schools were amalgamated with myths and popular beliefs, and produced a system of morality adapted to popular consumption. A divine breath, "the soul of the world," to quote from the poetry of the system, penetrates all things and gives life to the universe. All that lives and has breath, and therefore the souls of men, are but part of this universal soul; when the human soul enters the body it loses part of this divine essence, and even death, which separates it from the body, does not at once bring full purification. After death the soul must be purged for a thousand years to recover its original saintliness; after this period, when the soul has recovered its first nature, God plunges it into the river of Lethe, the past is forgotten, and the soul goes forth upon the earth to animate another body. Thus the wheel of life revolves eternally upon itself, and the souls in this temporary prison of the body, "the gloomy prison which hides from their eyes the heaven from which they come," must strive to prove worthy of their divine nature by living a virtuous life as far as they can.\* These and similar ideas, conjoined with Stoic teaching, were used by Sextius and his son of the same name to found a sect at Rome which became a kind of practical school of morality; the difficult virtues were not only taught, but also practised, master and pupil pursuing thrift, temperance, sincerity, simplicity, and even vegetarianism.† At that time the school proved highly successful;‡ though many were abandoned to luxury and debauchery, others suddenly experienced a longing for simplicity, chastity and austerity of life, and disciples came in from every side. Considerable sensation was caused by the conversion of Lucius Crassicius. He was a freedman, well known as a man of letters and as a

\* Boissier, *La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, Paris, 1892, i. p. 295.

† Seneca, *Epist.* LXXIII. xv., CVIII. 17.

‡ Seneca, *Nat. Quæst.* VII. xxxii. 2. *Sextiorum nova . . . secta . . . cum magno impetu cæpisset.* 1.



professor; among his pupils was Julius Antonius, the son of Antony and Fulvia. 25 B.C.

Moral reformation, however, by means of philosophy was possible only for minds already prepared by study and reading. The majority of the nation, the soldiers, politicians, merchants, lawyers and agriculturists had hitherto sought and secured command of matter alone, and were therefore less amenable to literary influences; for moral reformation they could rely only upon material forces and political measures. Philosophical fancies and moral exhortations were not likely to regenerate the republic; laws, magistrates, threats and penalties were required. As the nobility neglected their duties, squandered their wealth, preferred debauchery to State business and love to war, they must be forced to accomplish their duties by stringent legislation; the old magistracies which had supervised the morals of the upper classes must be revived, together with a rigid and impartial administration of justice. There was in particular an urgent demand for the nomination of censors.\* Hence we see the rise of a great puritan movement, especially among the middle classes, the senators and knights of narrow means, authors, freedmen and artisans; it was a movement intended to eradicate by means of new legislation and new penalties the vices introduced by wealth, the unchastity of women, the venal connivance of their husbands, celibacy, luxury and bribery. Among the masses this movement was actuated by numerous and very divergent ideas and feelings. Predominant, however, was a very sincere sense of patriotism. The public wished to know what would become of Rome if the nobility could no longer prove worthy of its exalted position as in former years. When a noble matron became the mistress of a freedman, of a foreigner, or of a rich plebeian for money, many people regarded such an action as

\* Unless some such public movement took place, it is difficult to explain why Augustus should have suddenly nominated censors in the year 22, when public feeling was disturbed by the disorders of famine, or why he should have taken the place of these officials when their incompetency became manifest. The next chapter will provide explanations of the fact, but the unexpected nomination can only be explained by presupposing some agitation of this kind.



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an outrage upon the dignity of Rome and a stain upon its glorious history. There was also a desire that provincial government should be characterised by greater justice and humanity; possibly the teaching of Cicero concerning the government of subject races may have been widely spread, and in any case humanitarianism was a rising force; possibly, again, there was a growing realisation of the fact that as Rome was less powerful she must be more just. There was also the force of tradition. For centuries traditional morality had inculcated simplicity, chastity and the family virtues, and only centuries could undo the teaching of centuries. Finally, there was the jealousy of the middle classes, who were now sufficiently depraved to covet the luxuries of the rich but too poor to procure them. The workmen and contractors of Rome may have admired the new luxury which brought prosperity to themselves, but the small Italian landholders, the intellectual classes, the poorer senators and knights were furious at the sight of a few privileged individuals able to indulge their inclinations as they pleased, while they themselves were obliged to walk in the narrow path of virtue between the confining walls of poverty. The discontent which had roused public opinion to overwhelm Cornelius Gallus, though not now vented upon one man, found issue in violent criticism of current morality; the corruption of the upper classes was exaggerated, and legislation was demanded which should make the pleasures forbidden to the poor difficult or dangerous for the rich; such legislation was to banish adultery, to place limits upon luxury, to force provincial governors to practise a mild and equitable administration, and to impose upon every one the same uniform and moderate ideal of virtue.

Virgil's  
"Æneid."

Thus the rising Puritan movement contained very different elements; there were instincts of hatred and jealousy, there were also noble and salutary aspirations; there was the respect for tradition, which is to nations what family feeling is to individuals; there was the elementary sense of a distinction between good and evil innate in every healthy mind when not blinded by passion or self-interest; finally there was a genuine anxiety lest excessive selfishness and tyrannical administration



should lead to social disruption. We can therefore understand that the puritan movement found ardent and sincere supporters even among the privileged oligarchy whom it menaced, and that one of these supporters was Tiberius, the son-in-law of Augustus. Of high birth and brought up by Livia, who was a Roman patrician of the old stock, Tiberius was also carried away by the general movement, seized with admiration for the old Roman nobility, and ready to imitate every virtue which tradition attributed to his ancestors. We can also understand why a great poet like Virgil drew the theme of a great poem from this movement. He was an admirer of Greek literature, but was irresistibly attracted by the burning questions of the day; he therefore proposed to provide Italy with a great national epic which was to be both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of the Latin race and the poem of its moral and religious regeneration. This work, both in subject-matter and in form, was to include the loftiest and the purest sentiments of Roman and Greek genius, popular beliefs and philosophical doctrines, religion and war, art and morality, tradition and imperialism. So vast a plan demanded great imaginative power and unremitting industry. Augustus while in Spain often asked Virgil how his poem was progressing, and jestingly urged him to send a few fragments. Virgil invariably replied that he had not yet accomplished anything worth reading, and sometimes felt dismayed by the grandeur of his task, which seemed to increase as his work progressed.\* These, however, were only temporary discouragements or despondencies; the delicate poet possessed that tenacity which the fickle Horace lacked, and returned with fresh vigour to his gigantic task, while Horace spent months in polishing a few poems of thirty or forty lines.

For several centuries, and, indeed, since the time when contact between Rome and the east became continual, Greek scholars had attempted to connect the legend of Æneas and his voyages after the fall of Troy with the most famous legends of Latium, especially with those referring to the foundation of Rome; their object was to establish a kind of mythical relationship

The legend  
of Æneas.

\* Macrobius, *Sat.* I. xxiv. 2; Donatus, p. 61, 14 R.

25 B.C.

between the Latins and the Greeks. With the countenance of the Roman Senate, which had occasionally used the legend for purposes of oriental policy, its ramifications had slowly increased; several great Roman families, including the *gens Julia*, traced their origin from the legendary comrades of Æneas; the main legend and its subordinate versions had become so entirely a part of the mythical history of Rome that no one would venture to criticise it. Livy, indeed, hints in his preface that he regards these legends as fabulous, but states his intention of relating them without criticism out of respect for antiquity. Consequently he begins his history by narrating the arrival of Æneas in Italy, his alliance with the king Latinus, his marriage with the king's daughter, the foundation of Lavinium, and the wars with Turnus, king of the Rutuli, and Mezentius, king of the Etruscans; he then enumerates the long list of the descendants of Æneas, the towns and colonies founded by his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons, until he reaches Romulus and Remus. Thus we can readily understand why Virgil chose this legend for the subject of his poem.

The legend  
transformed  
by Virgil.

His object, however, could not be achieved by a mere repetition of the legend in its traditional form. Virgil gives it breadth and grandeur by using literary forms borrowed from the purest Greek sources, and makes it the vehicle to express the great national idea of his age—the idea that religion was the basis of Rome's political and military greatness, that Rome's historical destiny was the amalgamation of east and west, the east providing religious ceremonies and beliefs, the west political wisdom and military virtues, the idea that Rome was to be both the capital of an empire and a holy city. In the first six books Virgil intended to compose a poem of adventure and travel in imitation of the *Odyssey* and to tell the story of the wanderings of Æneas from the fatal night when Troy was destroyed until his arrival in Italy. The last six books were to be a miniature *Iliad* and to relate the wars fought in Italy by Æneas against the Rutuli until the death of their king Turnus. Both in the new *Iliad* and the new *Odyssey* Æneas was to be the very human hero of the Homeric poems, fierce or cunning, simple or treacherous, loved and protected by the gods for



himself. He was to be a symbolical personage, a kind of religious hero entrusted by the gods, or by some of them, with the mission of carrying to the warlike race of Latium the worship which would make Rome the mistress of the world, protected as she was by the gods, who could see her destined influence upon the history of mankind.\* Æneas therefore goes forth *pietate insignis et armis*,† almost automatically, upon his adventurous journey; he has no need to struggle, like the Homeric heroes, with all the energy of his mind against the dangers which threaten him; he feels no anxiety concerning the object of his long journey, but surrenders himself to the divine will, which is the supreme law of all things. The real protagonists in this drama are not men, but gods. Virgil wished them to be figures both lovely and awful, and invested them with the solemn and yet graceful beauty with which they were endowed by Greek mythology; as if to prove their power, he constantly represents them as outraging the laws of nature, and sometimes those of justice and reason. The gods involve Æneas in fearful dangers, and save him by the most unexpected miracles. They inspire him with love for Dido, and force him to leave her merely because this abandonment is necessary to the glory of Rome, which is to rise upon the ruins of Carthage. They guide Æneas to Italy, and give him a wife and kingdom and a country in the face of all justice and probability; he was an intruder in Latium, and Lavinia had been promised to Turnus. Evander and Turnus become the scene of a beautiful picture, in which the poet represents the primitive simplicity of the old Latin customs which his corrupt contemporaries profoundly admired, at any rate in literature. In comparison with the Latins, the Phrygians of Æneas are merely orientals devoid of energy or capacity. At the same time this disadvantage does not hinder Æneas from depriving Turnus, with the aid of the gods, of his kingdom and of his bride, or from overcoming the warlike Latins with his

\* Gaston Boissier was the first to discover that the *Æneid* is a religious poem. In the following pages I have merely summarised his admirable and final analysis of Virgil's poem. See *La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, Paris, 1892, i. p. 221 ff.

† *Æn.* vi. 403.



25 B.C. feeble Phrygians. He brings to Latium "the holy things" which Latium needs, as it is to conquer the world by war and prayer; this act suffices to justify the outcome of the war, with its revolting injustice and its improbability.

The pious  
Æneas.

Thus in the midst of the greatest dangers Æneas is wholly preoccupied with the task of learning the mysterious will of the gods and observing both in sadness and in joy the rites of that religion which he is bringing to the new nation. He continually consults oracles, listens to the rustling of leaves, attentively observes the flight of birds and the lightning-flash; through the narrow windows of the augur's art he suddenly looks out upon the vast mysteries around him. While Troy is burning he remembers to save the fire of Vesta, which is to burn for ever in the little valley at the foot of the Palatine and of the Capitol; on leaving Troy with his father after fighting throughout the night, he remembers that he is stained with blood and must not touch the household gods, and therefore begs his father to take them; from morning to night, in every danger, in sorrow and in joy, he prays constantly and continually, to the boredom of his readers if not of the gods. Thus the poet finds opportunity for minute description, with archaeological and theological detail, of every ceremony in the Latin ritual, even of those which had long fallen into disuse. Finally, in obedience to the gods, Æneas does not hesitate to follow the road marked by popular legend and to descend into a lower world peopled by mythological monsters and enlightened by Pythagorean philosophy; his object is to seek that justice which is not to be found upon the earth and to learn the future. The Italian legend which excited the ridicule of Lucretius placed the gate of hell in the grotto of Lake Avernus, near Naples. Though Virgil had been the pupil of Siro, he uses this poetic legend, thus disassociating himself almost entirely from the Epicureanism which he had professed in his early youth, and brings Æneas into hell through this gate accompanied by the Cumæan Sibyl. The earth groans, the mountains quake, the dogs bark, Æneas follows his subterranean path, dark as a forest on a moonless night, and reaches the threshold of hell, where in the branches of a vast elm live



the Dreams, and where the evil things of Latin allegory consort with the monsters of Greek mythology, Remorse with the Centaurs; pale Sicknesses and sad old Age with the Chimæra and the Gorgons; Fear, Hunger, and Poverty, with the Lernæan Hydra and the Harpies. When the threshold of hell has been crossed, one of the most popular characters in antique mythology appears, Charon the rude ferryman of the Styx, who would only transport beyond the waters those who had received burial. The Sibyl furnishes the ferryman with the necessary guarantee; Æneas is then rowed across the Styx, finds himself before the judge Minos and sees around him the first inhabitants of hell, the victims of fate, men who have been destroyed by destiny or accident through no fault of their own; those who died in childhood, warriors killed in battle, suicides, innocent men condemned to death and executed. There they live in a condition which is neither sad nor happy, free from torment only regretting the life which they have failed to enjoy. Æneas next sees the "mourning meadows," where the souls of those wander who have been the victims of love. The road then divides. On the left hand it leads to Tartarus where no just man may enter; thus Æneas only gains a glimpse of glowing flames through the open doors, hears from a distance the despairing cries, the clank of iron and of chains; but the Sibyl describes at length what he cannot see: the gloomy prison where horrible tortures punish the crimes and vice which the Puritan movement then wished to eradicate from Rome. There are placed brothers at enmity, ungrateful sons, patrons who have robbed their clients, disloyal freedmen, adulterers, those who have taken up arms against their country and magistrates who have taken bribes. These punishments are everlasting and so fearful that the Sibyl refuses to describe them. Æneas and his guide then hurry on to the pleasant groves and the happy resting-place of the Elysian Fields, where Æneas finds his father Anchises. Anchises expounds to him the future of Rome and the Pythagorean doctrine of soul and body, of condemnation and purification, of oblivion and reincarnation:

Principio cœlum ac terras camposque liquentis

25 B.C.

Lucentemque globum lunæ titaniaque astra  
Spiritus intus alit . . .

magnificent lines and sublime ideas which form a strange philosophical and ideal pendant to the material hell of popular legend, with its monsters and its tortures.

Horace compared with Virgil.

Horace was a powerful but lonely mind, standing apart from events and passing judgment upon them in isolation; indifferent and almost alien to Rome and Italy, to its past and present, he examines, analyses and defines the thousand inconsistencies of the marvellous age when his genius flourished. Virgil, on the other hand, is a communicative genius in contact with life through his warmth of feeling, his imagination and his learning; he not only describes life but is in love with it, glorifies it, purifies it from its corruption, reconciles its contradictions and ennobles it with his art. During that marvellous epoch when he flourished side by side with Horace, he united in one magnificent but imperfect whole the contradictory aspirations which then agitated the best minds in Italy. The *Æneid* is a poetical commentary upon the religious, moral and military views of its age; it is the voice not merely of a poet but of an epoch.

The Arabian expedition.

While Virgil was thus working for the religious and military regeneration of Italy and while the public impatiently awaited the appearance of his poem, the direction of public worship was entrusted to such a *pontifex maximus* as Lepidus and the command of the army to such a general as Augustus. The old triumvir in bitterness of heart had retired to Circei and declined any connection with public business; Augustus was even more unsuccessful in Arabia than in Spain. The expedition of *Ælius Gallus* had opened disastrously. After the embarkation at Myoshormos and the passage of the Red Sea, the army had been forced to halt at Leucecome, the port of disembarkation, by reason of a strange malady which attacked a large number of the troops. Such at least was the current account.\* Thereupon a horde of Ethiopians who had learned that part of the Egyptian troops were in Arabia, seized the opportunity to invade Egypt and pene-

\* Strabo, XVI. iv. 24.



trated as far as Philæ, to take vengeance for the expedition of Cornelius Gallus. Petronius the prefect was then occupied in repulsing this invasion.\* Augustus was thus justified in his reprehension of the policy of the first *præfectus*. 25 B.C.

At the same time more formidable difficulties had occurred in the east. During his absence in Spain, Augustus had been joined by Tiridates, a claimant to the Persian throne, who had invoked the protection of Rome. During the preceding years Tiridates had profited by a domestic dissension to drive out Phraates, whose pride and cruelty had become intolerable after the victory over Antony. Phraates had taken refuge with the Scythians, had enlisted soldiers among them, reconquered his kingdom and driven out Tiridates. The latter, however, had been able to seize the eldest son of Phraates during his flight and had brought him to Augustus.† The young man was a valuable hostage, but Augustus by accepting responsibility for him, might provoke reprisals on the part of the Parthian king and raise once more the eastern problem, which seemed to have been temporarily settled. These civil wars in Persia were both a delight and an anxiety to Augustus; they weakened the hostile empire but at the same time they threatened complications more or less dangerous in the provinces and states under Roman protectorate. At this moment a most unfortunate event happened; Amyntas, the king of Galatia, was killed during an expedition against a petty brigand tribe, the Onomadensi, and left but a few young children.‡

\* Strabo, XVII. i. 54.

† Justin, XLII. v. 5-7.

‡ Strabo, XII. vi. 5; Dion, liii. 26; Eutropius, vii. 10. Lollius was pro-prætor during the following year, that is to say in the year 24. No historian tells us for what reason Galatia was reduced to a Roman province and not given to the successors of Amyntas, who were disregarded as though they did not exist. We know from an inscription (C. I. G. 4039) that the Galatian king had a son called Pelamenes, who was still living at the end of Augustus' rule or the beginning of Tiberius' reign. Why was Pelamenes deprived of the succession? I have said that he must have been a child at that time and this seems to me the most likely explanation. It harmonises with the late date of the Greek inscription and explains why Galatia was reduced to a Roman province, though the policy of Augustus was then opposed to the reduction of States under the Roman protectorate. We have seen that in the preceding year Augustus declined to annex Mauretania;



25 B.C. Rome thus lost her most loyal and strongest ally in the east, the only man capable of putting an army, organised upon Roman models, into the field against Persia. In the absence of any capable heir to the throne, the Senate had declared Galatia a Roman province and had transferred the province and the Galatian army to Augustus. This was a great honour but also a heavy burden and a dangerous responsibility, if war should happen to break out in the east. Thus public feeling was again disturbed towards the end of 25; the military expeditions had failed or proved fruitless and new complications seemed likely in the east. These difficulties and the proposed marriage of Augustus' nephew, Marcellus, with his daughter Julia, decided him to return to Rome in the second half of the year 25. He was not even able to assure the Romans that he had completed the conquest of the Cantabrians and Asturians and their gold mines. Hardly had he left Spain when these tribes revolted once more.\* His health also had grown weaker. He seems to have been attacked with writers' cramp at that time and he fell ill upon the voyage, was obliged to halt and commissioned Agrippa to supervise the marriage festivities of Julia and Marcellus.†

Augustus  
returns to  
Rome.

His return, however, caused much satisfaction in Italy. There was a general idea that he would be able to remedy all the evils of which men had complained during his absence. Horace expressed this public confidence in lines of somewhat exaggerated flattery, comparing Augustus with Hercules on his "victorious" return from Spain;‡ such too was the attitude of the majority of the Senate, either from subservience, indolence or sincere admiration. In a session held on the first day of the year 24, the Senate approved every measure of Augustus and confirmed its approval by oath, as in

a few years later we shall observe the same policy in the case of Armenia. It thus seems probable that Galatia was declared a Roman province because no successor capable of ruling could be found.

\* Dion, liii. 29.

† Dion, liii. 27. According to Jacoby (*Etudes sur la sélection*, Paris, 1881, p. 56), writers' cramp is the malady referred to in the passage of Suetonius (Auguste, 80) *dextræ quoque manus digitum salutare*. . . . As we know that he was ill at that time we may assume that the malady then began.

‡ Odes, III. xiv. 1-2.



revolutionary times, thereby undertaking not to withdraw its approbation.\* Further proofs of this spirit were soon forthcoming; on approaching Rome, Augustus wished to distribute four hundred sesterces to all the plebeians and asked that the *lex Cincia*, which forbade such gifts, might be suspended in his case; the Senate replied by exempting him from all laws.† The privilege did not seem excessive in the case of a man whose return was celebrated by Horace in such lines as these:

Hic dies, vere mihi festus, atras  
Eximet curas; ego nec tumultum  
Nec mori per vim metuam, tenente  
Cæsare terras.‡

The legend of Augustus and his omnipotence acquired new vigour, but the subject of it was even more convinced of its falsehood than when he left Rome. It seemed an impossibility to satisfy so many vague and antagonistic desires. Naturally he was not willing to accept the complete suspension of law in his own case.§ Shortly after his return, which took place in the first half of the year 24,|| Petronius sent to Rome a thousand Ethiopian slaves who had been captured by the expedition directed against the invaders of upper Egypt.¶ This enterprise, at least, had proved successful and Egypt was once more freed from danger. Ælius Gallus had begun his march at the end of the winter upon the Yemen and if he were able to secure the treasure of the Sabæans, Italy would have at least one victory to her credit and Augustus would be provided with sufficient money to meet all required reforms.

Reform, however, was demanded without delay; the elec-

\* Dion, liii. 28.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Odes*, III. xiv. 13-16.

§ We can thus reconcile the explicit statement of Dion with the fact that this dispensation from obedience to the laws is never afterwards mentioned. There seems no sufficient reason for supposing Dion to be in error.

|| Dion, after enumerating the decrees issued at the beginning of the year 24, says that they were passed during his absence (*ἀποδημοῦντι . . . αὐτῷ*). Augustus therefore returned to Rome after the first of January in that year and before the month of June, as is proved by the C. I. L. xiv. 2240.

¶ Strabo, XVII. 1. 54.

24 B.C.  
The responsi-  
bilities of  
Augustus.

tions for the year 23 were approaching, and, as some satisfaction for public opinion, Augustus proposed to the Senate that the candidature of Marcellus should be authorised ten years before the legal age and that of Tiberius five years below the same limit; he brought forward the former as a candidate for the ædileship and the latter for the quæstorship.\* The ædileship and the quæstorship were posts generally avoided and Augustus, by thus placing the members of his family at the service of the republic, reminded the nobility that their privileges must be justified by their zeal. Notwithstanding his bad health, he wished to follow his usual custom in Rome of constant public appearance and therefore was careful to fulfil all his duties as magistrate, senator, noble and citizen. These duties were numerous and varied; as consul he was obliged to decide cases from his ivory chair, put up public contracts to auction,† undertake all the State correspondence, convoke the Senate, lay all kinds of information before it, and appear at an infinite number of civil and religious ceremonies. He was pro-consul of three provinces, which he was forced to administer through his legates; as commander-in-chief, he was responsible for twenty-three legions and for numerous auxiliary forces scattered throughout the empire. Every day brought numberless questions for settlement, mistakes for correction, omissions to be repaired and correspondence of every kind. Augustus had thought for a moment of appointing Horace as his secretary, but the latter had refused.‡ As *princeps senatus*, Augustus was obliged to preside over the meetings of this assembly; as member of the college of augurs, of the college of pontiffs and of the college of the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, he was obliged to be present at meetings, ceremonies and banquets. As head of the State appointed to set an example of civic virtue, he was obliged to accomplish all the duties which tradition laid upon the Roman nobles and to lend his gratuitous help in law-

\* Dion, liii. 28. Those decrees, as Dion says himself, are explained by the fact that the number of quæstors was inadequate for that year. Thus we have here no tyrannical usurpation of power, but rather a censure upon aristocratic sloth and a device for averting the ill effects of that sloth.

† Ovid, *Pont.*, IV. v. 17 ff.

‡ Suetonius, *Vita Hor.*



suits to every client of his family, to his friends and to the poor plebeians who had any claim upon him, in other words, to all the veterans of the civil wars.\* He was obliged to appear at every public function from the senatorial sessions to the elections, and during the latter he set an example of canvassing the tribes with his candidates for votes as in the old days of the republic, while he gave his own vote as an ordinary citizen.† Finally he was obliged to entertain largely‡ and to accept an equal number of invitations and therefore to put a good face upon the most ill-prepared dinners; for if he had appeared to disapprove the hospitality of the more modest establishments, he would have offended all the citizens by an apparent assumption of superiority.§

24 B.C.

Thus the facts show that this multiplication of duties devised by Julius Cæsar might have proved a valuable opportunity to a man of extraordinary activity during a period of disturbance and distress; but it could not be the new principle of a settled government, which was not directed by demi-gods but by men as liable to fatigue as the meanest of the citizens. Only a man of iron could have performed such a task unaided and Augustus was unequal to the effort. In the month of June he fell ill once more || and was unable to do any business for the rest of the year—except to spend money upon buildings and festivities. Meanwhile Ælius Gallus concluded his Arabian expedition with no great success. After a difficult march he reached the principal town of the Sabæans, Mariba; he was unable to find the desired treasure anywhere and was obliged to return empty-handed with an army decimated by disease. The responsibility for this failure was thrown upon the Nabatæans and in particular upon the ministers of the king Silleus, who accompanied Gallus, and is said to have betrayed him under pretext of giving help. It is difficult to say whether this explanation is correct or was invented by the Romans to hide their own mistakes.¶ Assuming the treachery of the Nabatæans to have

Failure of the Arabian expedition.

\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 56.† *Ibid.*‡ Suetonius, *Aug.* 74.§ Macrobius, *Sat.* II. iv. 13; *pæne se nulli invitanti negabat.*|| *C. I. L.* xiv. 2240, v. 11.¶ Strabo, XVI. iv. 24; Dion, liii. 29; Mon. Anc., v. 22-23 (lat.). The *Adulis* of Dion must be a mistake for Mariba.



23 B.C. taken place, an obvious reason for their action is at hand. Arabia and Egypt were largely interested in the trade between the Mediterranean, India and China, and every Arabian people was interested in preventing the intruding State, which had now become master of Egypt, from seizing the route to the far east which was the rival of the Alexandrian route and reached Phœnicia by way of Leucecome and Petra.\*

Illness of  
Augustus.

Thus the year 23 opened disastrously. Misfortune continued, although the ædile Marcellus attempted to cheer the metropolis by giving magnificent entertainments with his uncle's money.† A disease to which the ancients give the name of plague and which a modern writer regards as an epidemic of typhus, overran Italy and invaded Rome; a political catastrophe seemed imminent when Augustus was attacked by it after many other victims had perished. It was doubtless in the spring and certainly before the month of June that he fell ill for the third time of the most serious attack he had had.‡ Rome was informed one day that Augustus was at the point of death, that he had made his final arrangements and his will, handing over to Piso, his colleague in the consulship, all papers of public interest, including the financial accounts drawn up by his private clerks; he had ventured to recommend Agrippa to the Senate and people as his successor, but in so discreet a manner as not to wound the feelings of the most whole-hearted republicans. He had contented himself with giving Agrippa his ring and his seal.§ The emotion

\* Strabo, XVI. iv. 24.

† Dion, liii. 31.

‡ Dion, liii. 30. In the month of June he must have been nearly well, for he resigned the consulship, as we shall see. (Suetonius, *Aug.* 81).

§ Dion very clearly says in two passages that Augustus appointed no successor (liii. 30); *διάδοχον μὲν οὐδένα ἀπέδειξε . . .* (liii. 31) *οὐδένα τῆς ἀρχῆς διάδοχον καταλελοιπὸς ἦν*. The gift of his ring to Agrippa was merely an act of personal confidence and a private affair; at the same time it might be regarded as a recommendation to the Senate and people to choose Agrippa in his place. Two points at least are certain; he made no recommendation in favour of Marcellus (*see* Dion, liii. 31), and his support of Agrippa as indicated by the transference of the ring in the views of some people, was so vague that many believed he wished the post of *princeps* to be abolished upon his death (Dion, liii. 31). Thus his anxiety is clear to show the people that all trace of dynastic or hereditary rights was excluded from the new system.



produced by this news may be easily imagined. No one could look forward to the future if Augustus was suddenly to die at the age of forty, with his work undone and the republic still weak. This danger was averted by the appearance of an oriental freedman, a physician. Augustus believed in traditional remedies for the sicknesses of the body politic but not for himself and preferred Greek science to the family recipes of the great Romans. There was in his house a famous doctor who had tended Juba II., king of Mauretania, and had founded a new school of medicine, by name Antonius Musa. When all believed that Augustus was dead, this physician cured him by a cold water treatment.\* Great was the public rejoicing and the physician was overwhelmed with honours. A statue was raised to him by public subscription and placed side by side with that of Æsculapius; the Senate gave him a pecuniary reward and added his name to the list of knights.† Nor was this all; the fame of Musa was reflected upon doctors in general and, in a moment of universal enthusiasm, the Senate voted immunity, or exemption from taxation and public duties, for every one practising medicine in Rome and in Italy.‡ Thus the cure of Augustus seemed forthwith to have broken down the habitual and general distrust of the scientific medical system of the Greeks. It is a new and strange proof of the fact that in that age conservatism was waning; admiration for the things of old, distrust of novelty, the desire to revive traditional customs, the tendency to introduce oriental culture in no case represented invariable currents of opinion. It was not from mere caprice or stupidity that the champions of Roman tradition detested Greek medicine as a mixture of charlatanism and avarice.§ A military aristocracy is prone to despise the learned professions and in particular the doctors and lawyers, who form the backbone of the middle classes by reason of their culture, their connections and their influence, and who can consequently, when they have grown powerful,

\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 81; Dion, liii. 30.

† Dion, liii. 30; Suetonius, 39.

‡ Dion, liii. 30.

§ Concerning the general scorn of high Roman society for Greek medicine during the second half of the first century, see Pliny, N. H. XXIX. i. 11, 15-27.

23 B.C.

thwart the public and private influence of a military aristocracy, or disseminate ideas in antagonism to the ideals of such an aristocracy. For centuries the Roman aristocracy had preserved a monopoly of the legal profession ; medicine had been despised and had therefore been abandoned to orientals because they were merely freedmen. The dislike of this profession must have been the keener in Rome at this moment for the reason that these oriental freedmen came from distant schools and their ideas in general were profoundly different from those inculcated by Roman tradition. Great would have been their power if they had been able to inspire the Romans with the belief that they held the secret of life and death. Long standing distrust was always ready to persuade the sufferer that the old family prescriptions, handed down from father to son, were worth more than all the theories of Greek medicine. Yet one of these doctors suddenly wins fame and receives the honours reserved for conquerors and great diplomatists, and within the space of a day the legislators extend their protection to the former objects of their mistrust and their hostility.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Augustus once more resigns—Augustus and the nobility—Disagreement between Marcellus and Agrippa—Agrippa in the east—Further progress of the puritan party—The constitutional reform of the year 23 B.C.—The case of Marcus Primus—Embassy from the Parthian king to Rome—The Senate refers the ambassadors to Augustus—The true beginning of the Roman monarchy—The famine; the people proclaim Augustus dictator—The semi-dictatorship—Failure of the censorship of Plancus and Paulus—The conspiracy of Cæpio and of Murena—Departure of Augustus for the east—Fresh disturbances at Rome.

THE joy of Augustus' admirers had been premature. While they were overwhelming Antonius Musa with rewards, Augustus declared that in consequence of his illness and fatigue, he felt obliged to retire into private life.\* The constitutional reform of the year 27, which had lost much of its stability, was completely overthrown by this resignation and great was the consternation throughout Rome. All realised that Augustus must have rest and yet he seemed to be the only man able to maintain the balance of parties, to abolish or at least to check the struggle of opposing forces which was wasting the strength of the republic. Every effort was therefore made to induce him to revise his decision.

\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 28. *De reddenda republica bis cogitavit . . . rursus, lædio diuturnæ valetudinis, quum etiam magistratibus ac Senatu domum accitis, rationarium imperii tradidit.* This phrase certainly alludes to the scene related by Dion and proves that the *tædium diuturnæ valetudinis*, of which Suetonius speaks, was the result of this illness. Suetonius obviously confuses the wish of Augustus to retire and his transference of the documents, an act which was performed during his illness, while his wish to retire was probably not expressed until after his cure. It thus seems possible to make a connection between his wish to retire and the constitutional reform of this year.

23 B.C.

His motives.

We have now to ask whether Augustus sincerely wished to retire. It is probable that his resignation was no more than a political move. The situation was then so strangely confused that it was as difficult for Augustus to abandon the government as to continue it. It was difficult for him to continue because the heterogeneous aristocracy about him, composed of the old and the upstart nobility, became more restive and seditious. It was equally difficult to retire because such zeal and authority as the State still possessed were inspired solely by himself. The nobility were recovering their wealth by means of marriage, inheritance and other favourable opportunities, and also through the help of Augustus himself, through whose intervention the most valuable lands and mines in the provinces were distributed to the leading families of the old aristocracy, under the obligation of paying a small annual *vectigal*. Livia had secured the valuable copper mines in Transalpine Gaul.\* Sallust, the nephew of the historian, had received copper and iron mines in the newly conquered territory of the Salassi;† Marcus Lollius, the first governor of Galatia, had already laid the foundation of that vast wealth which his family accumulated, probably by concessions of public land;‡ by the kindness of Augustus, the augur, Cnæus Lentulus, whose sole merit was the accidental distinction of birth, was accumulating a fortune afterwards valued at several millions of sesterces.§ Many other aristocratic families who displayed vast wealth at Rome in successive years must have restored their fortunes in this way, if the mere name of Lentulus proved thus valuable in the eyes of the *princeps*. In short, Augustus zealously and successfully took in hand the task of restoring the fortunes of the old nobility.

His unpopularity.

This was in itself a sufficient reason for the efforts of the nobility to keep him in power, to grant him the widest privileges through the Senate and the most honourable decrees,

\* Pliny, XXXIV. i. 3.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Pliny, IX. xxxv. 118; he attributes the vast fortune of Lollius to his extortions in the east. Probably he did not use this expedient until later when he felt safer and his fortunes were really founded by the bounty of Augustus.

§ Seneca, *De Benef.* II. xxvii. 1.



but it did not follow that this aristocracy would obey his orders and his example and submit to severe discipline, or sacrifice its leisure, its enjoyment and its private advantages to the public weal. So soon as the fear of the triumvirate had disappeared the nobility grew insolent and domineering with its recovery of wealth; it realised that Augustus, beset with domestic difficulties, mindful of the civil wars and confronted by fresh dangers abroad, would not venture to make enemies among the upper classes. The consequence was a growing disinclination to submit to authority. Senators who had been half ruined under the triumvirate ten or fifteen years before, who had despaired of their future and even of their lives, and who had been glad to live in obscurity, now paraded their ostentation in the streets of Rome, crowded the Senate, constantly disputed about trifles, hated one another profoundly and entertained a wholly nominal respect for Augustus. Men who owed him everything died without a bare mention of him in their wills, which at that time was a great insult. Wills were opened from time to time in which the testator professed to explain his reasons for leaving nothing to Augustus by the insertion of complaints or invectives against him, which the magistrate was obliged to read in public.\* Nor were such demonstrations confined to the dead; lampoons against him were passed from hand to hand;† many of his colleagues did not scruple to insult him when opportunity offered. Augustus had expelled from his house a Greek scholar of high reputation who said and wrote the most atrocious things about himself and Livia; Asinius Pollio had hastened to find a place for the man in his household and he became the fashion among the nobles.‡ Cnæus Lentulus himself professed regret that the bounty of Augustus had distracted him from his studies and obliged him to devote his attention to public business.§ Even more significant was the fact that in spite of his infinite patience the affection even of his oldest friends grew cold. All Rome knew that the friendship of Mæcenæ had cooled and the reason commonly alleged was a suspicion that Augustus entertained

\* Suetonius, *Aug.* 55.

† Seneca, *De Ira*, III. xxiii. 5.

‡ *Ibid.*

Seneca, *Benef.* II. xxvii. 2.



23 B.C. an undue admiration for his wife.\* Immediately after his cure, the man known to modern historians as the master of the world, was not sufficiently strong to put down a quarrel in his own family between his nephew Marcellus and his friend Agrippa. In the course of the quarrel, the reason of which is obscure, Agrippa complained, rightly or wrongly, that Augustus did not take his part as he should have done; in keen anger with his former friend he went away to the east, resolved to withdraw his services from the empire to revenge his outraged pride.† The discord between the members of the aristocracy may be inferred from their want of respect for the man who was their leader whether they wished it or not. Jealousies, slanders, quarrels and affronts were of daily occurrence. At a time when no one would pay attention to public business, there were magistrates who went to absurd lengths in order to give the people shows which out-rivalled the productions of their colleagues.‡ Finally, the provinces were

\* Dion, liv. 19.

† Dion (liii. 32) says that Augustus sent Agrippa to the east because Marcellus was jealous of him, for the reason that Augustus preferred Agrippa to Marcellus when he appointed a successor during his illness. Suetonius on the contrary (*Aug.* 66 . . . *Desideravit . . . Agrippæ patientiam . . .*) gives a very different report; he says that Agrippa went away in anger at certain preferences shown to Marcellus, and also because of some small coolness which he had noticed in Augustus (*ex levi frigoris suspicione et quod Marcellus sibi anteferreretur*). The version of Suetonius seems to me the more probable. Moreover Dion contradicts himself; in chapter xxx. he said that Augustus nominated no one as his successor, which is likely enough, as the post was not hereditary. Thus there can be no question of preference. Moreover when Dion says that Augustus sent Agrippa to the east, he is inclined to attribute to the *princeps* the powers of the emperors of his own day. Augustus could not send Agrippa to the east, he could only beg him to go. Agrippa therefore went of his own free will. The version of Suetonius, who regards Agrippa's departure as an act of vengeance, is thus more probable. Velleius Paterculus (II. xciii. 2) speaks of *tacitas cum Marcello offensiones*; and he explains the origin of the legend reported by Dion when he tells us that *successorem potentiae eius arbitrabantur futurum, ut tamen id per M. Agrippam secure ei posse contingere non existimarent*. The reference is therefore to discussions at Rome. The feeble state of Augustus' health gave rise to considerable anxiety for the future in the case of his death, and there were some who professed to know that his intention was to nominate Marcellus.

‡ Augustus in the year 22, took measures to stop this rivalry. See Dion, liv. 2.



subject to the caprice of the governors and the armies were under the severest discipline; in these departments the nobles who showed their pride at Rome, were often dazzled by their unlimited power and lost all sense of proportion. Cases of cruel and arbitrary action committed by provincial governors were frequent, and public opinion, with a growing sense of its responsibility for the welfare of the subject races, urgently demanded the repression of these excesses from Augustus.\* It was, however, extremely difficult for Augustus to act. Notwithstanding his vexation at Agrippa's departure, he had nominated him *legatus* for Syria,† that the quarrel with Marcellus might lead at any rate to some good. Relations with the Parthians were growing strained; Phraates sent an embassy to Rome to claim the surrender of his son and of Tiridates.‡ In any case it was but common prudence to place Agrippa at

\* Seneca, *De Ira* I. xviii. 2, 5, quotes certain facts of this nature in the time of Augustus. See also the anecdote of Vedius Pollio, Dion, liv. 23.

† Agrippa's mission in Syria has given rise to much doubt and to long discussion. Josephus is certainly wrong when he says (A. J. XVI. iii. 3) that Agrippa governed the whole of Asia for ten years, and confuses this first mission with the more extended powers which he received at a later date. With what powers then did Agrippa go to Syria in 23? Mommsen (*Res gestæ Divi Augusti*, 1865, p. 113) maintains that in the year 23 he held wider powers than those of a proconsul, but he does not know how they were conferred. Zumpt (*Comm. Epigr.* ii. p. 79) says that there must have been a *senatus consultum*, giving Agrippa the proconsulate of Syria. The most probable explanation is that Augustus then appointed Agrippa as *legatus* in Syria, as he was afterwards to appoint him *legatus* in Spain. One difficulty remains; Dion (liii. 32) says that Agrippa stayed at Lesbos and sent his legates into Syria. But a *legatus* had not the power of sending out subordinate *legati*. Possibly Dion was mistaken and gave the name of *legati* to subordinate officials of Agrippa, such as quæstors. If we do not admit that Agrippa was the *legatus* of Augustus, the difficulties become more insoluble. Syria was one of Augustus' provinces and we should be forced to admit that Augustus had restored Syria to the Senate, who conferred the proconsulship upon Agrippa, though in the year 23 he had not completed the legal interval of five years after his consulship which he had held in 27. We have no proof to show that Augustus resigned the province of Syria. Moreover, in the year 20, Augustus went to Syria on business of importance; why then should he have resigned this province three years before? Further, there was an important army in Syria, the difficulties with the Parthians were not yet settled and it seems unlikely that under such conditions Augustus should have changed the organisation of the province.

‡ Dion, liii. 33; Justin, XLIII. v. 8.



23 B.C. the head of the legions in Syria. Though Agrippa did not decline the nomination, he remained at Lesbos, like Achilles in his tent, and neglected the provinces.\* Hence Augustus, who would not venture to force him to an acceptance or refusal, was left without a *legatus* in Syria at a moment when he was threatened with a Parthian war.

The demand for  
social reform.

Meanwhile the Puritan movement was gaining strength among the middle classes, the more respectable senators and knights; there was a call for the re-establishment of the censorship, for severe legislation against the prevailing moral corruption and for the institution of some check upon the excesses of the upper classes; thus Augustus was confronted by a new and formidable embarrassment. The middle classes, to whom Augustus had given nothing, admired him with far greater sincerity than the upper classes who had received everything, and it was this popularity which proved the greatest source of strength to his government. He therefore realised that some moral satisfaction at least must be given to these classes. He could not venture, however, to countenance the movement openly and to use it as a means for bringing pressure to bear upon the idle undisciplined aristocracy. It was easy to cry for laws against the corruption of the rich but difficult to carry out such legislation. In the flourishing days of the republic the discipline of private life had been the affair of the *pater familias*, the family being then a miniature monarchy; now that these chiefs had been found wanting, it was impossible for the law to intervene without overthrowing the fundamental principle of family right and thereby ruining the tradition which all were anxious to restore. *Nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus*. Augustus was therefore inclined to re-elect censors and to take the first step to a new reform of the finance administration, which became more urgent year by year. He proposed that two administrators should be drawn by lot from the prætors every year, who would be known as the *prætores æarii*.\* In other respects he declined to compromise his position by revolutionary attempts at legislation. The situation bristled with difficulties and to

\* Dion, liii. 32.



crown his misfortunes at that critical moment, the only man who could have taken his place and the only helper upon whom he had hitherto been able to rely had left his side on account of some trivial quarrel. 23 B.C.

Discouraged by these obstacles, and anxious not to shatter such feeble health as remained to him, Augustus eventually devised a new constitutional reform which was to transfer his authority from Italy to the provinces, from domestic to foreign policy. He resolved to abandon the Cæsarean principle of cumulative offices; its continuance was impossible for him, as he could no longer bear the burden. He determined to secure discretionary powers of supervision and control over all provincial governors, whether they held their provinces from the Senate or himself; he would thus become the actual *princeps* desired by Aristotle, Polybius and Cicero, the supreme guardian of the constitution. This reform would relieve Augustus of the government of Rome and Italy, his most difficult task; he might absent himself from Rome and stay in the provinces for years if he pleased; he could continue his reorganisation of the imperial finances and distribute public property throughout the empire among his friends on leases of unlimited length, and no longer be forced to confine this distribution to property within his own provinces. Finally, he might satisfy the desires of the middle and intellectual classes in Italy by checking the most scandalous abuses in the provinces if he could not correct the morality of the metropolis; within reasonable limits he might realise the three famous lines in which Virgil defines the imperial mission of Rome:

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;  
Hæc tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem,  
Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

Augustus carefully distinguished three things which his contemporaries were ever ready to confuse—philosophy, poetry and politics. He considered that the first essential above all in the east was a mild, just and conciliatory policy. His views in this direction had been expressed some time earlier, after an earthquake in Asia Minor, when certain ruined towns

23 B.C. had ventured to apply to the Senate for help, though this body instead of lending money to the provinces, had plundered them for centuries. Augustus had supported the request and Tiberius had defended it before the Senate.\* He therefore resolved to attempt that reform of provincial administration which neither Sulla, Lucullus nor Cicero had been able to accomplish, and to begin with a journey to Greece and to the east; the task was now comparatively feasible, as there was little wealth to be got from the provinces and the terrible publicani had disappeared. Augustus was a past master in that supreme political art which consists in exaggerating difficulties in order to secure corresponding credit when they have been surmounted. He very readily undertook a task which had the supreme political merit of being perfectly easy and yet appearing extremely difficult.

The passing of  
the reform.

It thus seems probable that his resignation was a feint to induce the Senate and the people to approve the new constitutional reform, and in particular the resignation of the consulship; this latter measure must have caused much anxiety to the upper classes, who regarded Augustus' tenure of the consulship as the best guarantee for the maintenance of order at Rome and for the proper conduct of the elections. If it was easy to persuade the Senate to resign themselves to the loss of so convenient a consul, it was more difficult to tell the people, and the middle classes in particular, without more ado that Augustus, upon whom they had set their hopes, proposed to resign his supervision of Italian interests and administration. Probably for this reason Augustus accepted the tribunician power for life, and thus acquired such tribune's rights as he did not already hold, the right of veto, of laying proposals before the Senate and laws before the *comitia*. In this way his dissociation from Italian affairs did not seem wholly final; he would still retain a power of interference in Roman politics, though the consequent responsibility would be far less than any other consul was obliged to support.† About the middle

\* Suetonius, *Tib.* 8; see Agathias, ii. 17.

† Historians seem hitherto to have taken a wrong view in regarding the substitution of the life tribuneship for the consulship as the



of the year after the *Feriae Latinae* this agreement was carried out. Augustus resigned the consulship, and the Senate then granted him the right of supervision and control over all provincial governors; he also received the right of entering the *pomœrium* without losing his proconsular power and the tribuneship for life.\* By way of compensation to the aristocratic party, Augustus supported as candidate for the consulship Lucius Sextius, who had been formerly proscribed and was a faithful friend of Brutus.† Thus the obstacles which the ill-health of the *princeps* had created seemed to be smoothed away. Fresh embarrassments, however, speedily appeared; difficulties had been created not so much by the ill-health of Augustus, as was generally supposed, as by the constant inconsistencies which no decrees could abolish. Though public business was both urgent and complicated, the Senate and the magistrates made no attempt at energetic action; notwithstanding the constitutional reform, the *ædiles* and consuls during the second half of 23 would not even devote their attention to averting the famine which threatened Italy and Rome. The noble party exerted itself only to repeat the scandal of Cornelius Gallus in the case of Marcus Primus, an obscure governor of Macedonia, who had made a little expedition against the *Odryæ* without the authorisation of the Senate. Primus had been accused by the nobles with their usual mercilessness towards apparent usurpers of the dignities which they reserved for themselves; the little democratic

important part of the reforms of 23. This change is merely a subordinate part of the reform, and was made to give some empty satisfaction to Italy. Augustus already enjoyed the inviolability of a tribune, and he never used the veto or employed the power of proposing laws until the year 18, and these two rights were the most important parts of the tribune's power. Hence it certainly follows that the life tribuneship was merely an honorary gift. The essential part of the reform was the power, as Dion says (liii. 32): *ἐν τῷ ὑπηκόῳ τὸ πλεῖον τῶν ἐκασταχόθι ἀρχόντων ἰσχύειν*—supreme authority over all provincial governors. We see, in fact, that he made much use of this power during his journey to the east in the following year. The power must have been given him for the purpose of this voyage and for the vast political plan which we propose to expound. It must therefore be regarded as the most important part of the new constitution.

\* Dion, liii. 32.

† *Ibid.*



23 B.C. clique which had left Cornelius Gallus to perish took up the gage of battle on this occasion. Murena undertook to defend Primus; the rest of the party and Fannius Cæpio made every effort to secure his acquittal.\* Thus Rome was threatened with the scandal of a new lawsuit, while the imperceptible approach of famine was emptying her granaries. At this moment the Parthian ambassadors arrived; their monarch knew little of Roman constitutional law, and his servants therefore waited upon Augustus.

The Parthian  
embassy.

An embassy from Parthia to Rome at that moment might legitimately have diverted public attention not merely from such a trivality as the case of Primus, but also from more serious questions, such as the imminent famine. In fact, the Parthian problem was the most serious question of foreign policy as yet unsolved. Italy was not yet willing to recognise that her strength was inadequate for the conquest of Persia. Alexander had conquered the country, and Rome could do the same: such was the argument of the public, which forgot that the empire had only twenty-three legions and little money. Pending the Roman conquest, Phraates requested the surrender not merely of his son, but also of Tiridates, whom the republic had taken under its protection, and this request proved extremely embarrassing. To yield would have been to compromise Roman prestige in the east by an act of dangerous weakness; a haughty answer might provoke a war which could only be regarded with indifference by such inexperienced observers as the Italian public. The arrival of these am-

\* Concerning this trial we have some scanty information only from Dion, xxxiv. 3. It seems probable to me that political motives were at the bottom of it. Only thus can we explain the public excitement which it aroused, and which is proved by Dion's words and by the different decisions delivered on the intervention of Augustus. Moreover, Dion says that the *εὐ φρονόυντες* approved the action of Augustus in determining the result of the trial, and here again we have a proof that the rich and conservative party arranged a trial in the hope of a condemnation. I have therefore regarded this trial as an episode analogous to the struggle against Rufus, and as a final outbreak of the struggle between the noble and popular parties, in which the remnants of the latter were destroyed by lawsuits and intrigues, thanks to the support which Augustus gave to the conservative party. Those who were afterwards involved in the conspiracy naturally played their part in the trial.



bassadors was an important event for yet another reason; it was to apply a final and essential test to the constitutional restoration decided in 27. This important question of foreign policy was a matter for the Senate, according to the re-established constitution, because the Senate alone was competent to treat with foreign states. Augustus entertained a scrupulous regard for constitutional form, especially if he could thereby be relieved of some grave responsibility, and had accordingly referred the ambassadors of the Parthian king to the Senate. Thus for the first time since the restoration and for nearly half a century the Senate was asked to decide an important problem of foreign policy, with full power to act as it would, as in the prosperous days of the republic. For the first time it was presented with an opportunity of recovering that old diplomatic authority which had been the basis of its former power and of which it had been deprived for forty years by cliques and factions. The day when the Parthian ambassadors were brought into the Senate with the old ceremonial was thus an important moment in the history of Rome. Evidently the Senate could not be the supreme organ of the State if it could not conduct a foreign policy; it would now be seen once for all whether it was sufficiently strong to resume its ancient functions.

Unfortunately the great assembly was unable to stand the test. The Senate sent the ambassadors back to Augustus requesting the *princeps* to conclude some arrangement with them.\* Historians give no reason for this action, but we can easily understand that the Senate, after the devastation of the civil wars, possessed neither the courage, the intelligence, nor the will to deal with so serious a matter. It was afraid of the Parthians, and preferred to entrust the question to Augustus. Augustus realised that if the ambassadors were sent to and fro they would understand that the Roman authorities were afraid of them, and as some one was bound to discuss the matter with the embassy he undertook the negotiation of a compromise. He performed his task with considerable skill. He declined to give up Tiridates, but declared his willingness to

The Senate  
refers the  
ambassadors  
to Augustus.

\* Dion, liii. 33.



23 B.C. lend him no support in his efforts to recover the throne, to conclude a treaty of friendship with Phraates and to restore his son; but he demanded compensations. He doubtless perceived that Phraates, whose power was unstable, who was threatened with revolution and surrounded by claimants to the throne, was as anxious for a final peace as himself; profiting by the weakness of his adversary, with the traditional readiness of Roman diplomacy, he asked in exchange for his concessions, and as a formal pledge of the friendship which would conclude for ever the hostility between the two nations, the return of the standards and the prisoners taken in the last wars and the cession of Armenia, which had become a Parthian protectorate after Actium.\* The protectorate of Armenia was no particular advantage, but Augustus doubtless wished to secure it as a compensation to Italy for the desired conquest of Persia. Rome speedily learned that Augustus had concluded a satisfactory agreement with the Parthians, and satisfaction was general. No one, however, suspected that when the Senate asked Augustus to undertake the most important transaction of foreign policy which had come before the State since the restoration, it had laid the first stone in the foundation of that monarchy which was not to be completed until two centuries later. By this *senatus consultum* the Senate declared its incapacity to conduct the foreign policy of the empire; it voluntarily renounced its most important powers and transferred them to one man and to one family, and it thus cleared the way to monarchy far more efficaciously than Augustus himself, and, indeed, against his will. When Roman foreign policy was no longer guided by the Senate and when a family was able to treat with foreign nations, Rome could be said to have a dynasty within her walls.†

\* Dion (liii. 33) simply says that the negotiations aimed at a restoration of the standards and the prisoners, and makes no mention of Armenia. It seems to me that this point must have been included in the negotiations, for Augustus would hardly have risked a Parthian war for the sake of Armenia alone. He must have known when he invaded Armenia that Phraates was inclined to retire from it.

† We know by the *lex regia Vespasiani* (C. J. L. vi. 930, v. 1) that Augustus had the right to conclude alliances: *foedus cum quibus volet facere liceat*. But we do not know when this privilege was granted.



While the attention of Augustus was thus occupied with 23 B.C.  
the eastern frontiers of the empire, and while the aristocratic The famine.  
and popular parties were preparing for a legal struggle on the  
question of Primus, famine broke out in the helpless town.  
The people uttered regrets because Augustus was no longer  
consul, asserting that there would have been no lack of corn  
if he had been in that position.\* The famine, however, caused  
great suffering, and at the same time the Tiber overflowed,  
driving the starving plebeians out of their homes; the people  
thereupon rose, made demonstrations, proclaimed Augustus  
dictator, and sent deputations to him begging him to under-  
take responsibility for the corn-supply, as Pompey had done  
in 57;† in a word, the elaborate constitutional reform was  
overthrown in a few days. Augustus at first refused the  
dictatorship proffered by the mob; but when the mob sur-  
rounded the Senate and threatened to burn the Senate-house  
and the conscript fathers if they did not appoint Augustus  
dictator,‡ he realised that famine and agreements with foreign  
powers were questions requiring a different diplomacy, and  
consented to deal with the corn-supply. From the retired  
prætors he appointed certain *præfecti frumenti dandi*.§ He  
distributed corn,|| and attempted to procure supplies from  
every quarter. As an example to the indolent nobility, he  
empowered his grandson Tiberius to supervise the discharge  
of the corn at Ostia and its transportation to Rome.¶ Thus

It was possibly in the year 27, when the supreme authority of the State was constituted. This episode shows, at least, that in 23 Augustus did not wish to use this power, if he then possessed it, that he preferred to leave action to the Senate, and did not use his power until later, for reasons which we shall see hereafter.

\* Dion, liv. i, places these events in the year 22, but in this he is wrong; they took place during the second half of 23. The fact can be proved from Velleius Paterculus (II. xciv. 3), who tells us that Tiberius was quæstor at the age of nineteen when *mandatu vitrici* he dealt with the question of famine. Augustus cannot have given this commission to Tiberius until he had assumed the *cura annonæ* with full powers. But Tiberius was quæstor in 23, and on matters concerning his life Velleius is a more credible historian than Dion.

† Dion, liv. i.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*

|| Mon. Anc. iii. 11 (lat.).

¶ Such seems to me a possible interpretation of the somewhat vague passage in Velleius Paterculus (II. xciv. 3). See Suetonius, *Tib.* 8.



23 B.C.

a Claudius, the descendant of one of the proudest and noblest families of Rome, was to undertake the transportation of corn to the city, almost like a second Egnatius Rufus. This young man, however, possessed some of those aristocratic qualities which had almost entirely disappeared; he was energetic, anxious to please and to secure public notice, and he therefore accomplished his humble task with full success.\* Public feeling, however, was not satisfied. The discontent aroused by the famine had given new strength to the puritan movement; when the proposal to appoint Augustus dictator had been abandoned, the wish to make him censor for life revived. It was obvious that the State would collapse without some more stringent supervision of morals, and no one was better fitted for this task than Augustus. He had no desire for this new and difficult responsibility, but he had not the strength to oppose the violence of public feeling; he therefore proposed to the Senate as a compromise that censors should be elected. Two eminent men were accordingly chosen, Lucius Munatius Plancus and Paulus Æmilius Lepidus.† But dissatisfaction continued. The people demanded that Augustus should hold the dictatorship or censorship, in the wish to see him invested with full powers of energetic action, and once again Augustus was obliged to compromise in view of their persistence. He would not accept either the name or the authority of dictator or censor; he accepted the powers conferred upon him by the Senate; these he undoubtedly proposed to use exclusively in the service of the corn-supply. These powers enabled him to issue edicts as if he had been consul, whenever he considered that the public welfare demanded such measures; in other words, the discretionary power of supervision over the provinces which had been given him some months before was now extended to include Rome and Italy.‡ He was thus given a semi-dictatorship.

\* Velleius Paterculus, II. xciv. 3.

† Dion, liv. 2.

‡ Dion (liv. 1 and 2) does not say this in so many words, but the conjecture seems probable for the following reason. We know by the *lex de imperio Vespasiani* that Augustus had this power (C. I. L. vi. 930, 17-19): *utique quæcumque ex usu reipublicæ majestate divinarum huma[na]rum publicarum privatarumque rerum esse censebit, ei agere*



Amid these disturbances the year 23 came to an end. No one, not even Augustus himself, realised the true importance of that year and of the popular movement excited by the famine; this movement had driven the State towards the dictatorship, while the illness of Augustus in the earlier months had apparently inclined it to a narrower republicanism. The power of issuing edicts, hastily conferred by the Senate, amid the cries of a famished multitude, is the origin of the later despotic monarchy. Though but a slender seedling at first, it soon became a vast and spreading tree, overshadowing the whole empire. Of this, however, the actors in the affair, pre-occupied as they were with immediate anxieties, could have no idea. The troubles of the moment left no time for speculation upon the distant future. At the outset of the year 22 Marcellus was attacked by the same malady to which Augustus had nearly succumbed in the preceding year, but upon this occasion the cold-water treatment of Antonius Musa proved fruitless, and Marcellus, the only male descendant of Cæsar, died.\* However, the famine was overcome by the activity

22 B.C.

Augustus as  
censor.

*facere jus potestasque sit ita uti divo Augusto. . . .* Dion does not say when Augustus received this power; he forgot to mention the fact at the proper moment, and we therefore have to find the point where the omission took place and attempt to supply it. Here, in my opinion, is the correct point. Moreover, Dion himself alludes to something of the kind when he says that Augustus was able to refuse the dictatorship: *τὴν τε γὰρ ἐξουσίαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ ὑπὲρ δικτατόρας ἔχων*. This phrase alludes to certain wide powers over Rome and Italy, though Dion gives no reason for his statement that Augustus was more powerful than a dictator. Moreover, we find Augustus acting with the authority of a censor during this and the following year, to supplement the incapacity of the two censors nominated by the people; in successive years we shall find him exerting unlimited power in matters unconnected with the censorship; he went so far as to appoint a kind of Roman governor and a consul. This could not have been a purely arbitrary action, and must have been authorised by some legal formula. No moment could be more suitable for a *senatus consultum* in this direction than this time, when the people wished to have Augustus as dictator and were infuriated by the incapacity of the new censors. The transaction is thus a compromise explained by the incapacity of the censors. Augustus did not wish to accept either the dictatorship or the life censorship, but probably indignation was so keen that he accepted these vague discretionary powers, which enabled him to interfere at need in Italian affairs, as he was already empowered to intervene in provincial affairs.

\* Dion, liii. 30. Marcellus must have died in 22, and not in 23, as is



22 B.C.

of the *curator annonæ*, while the new harvest brought some relief; public feeling grew calmer, but Augustus was embarrassed by the semi-dictatorship, which he could not and would not use, while the two new censors, Munatius and Paulus, proved utter failures. They had begun their career by a quarrel, and Paulus had died shortly afterwards, while Munatius was too bad a character to improve the morals of others.\* This was a further disappointment for the puritan party, whose irritation was already profound. Augustus grew uneasy, and to soften their disappointment proposed to supply the scandalous negligence of the two censors by attacking the gravest abuses, in virtue of his semi-dictatorial power.† He forbade knights and sons of senators to appear upon the stage; he prohibited certain public banquets, and limited expenditure upon others; and to prevent rivalry between the magistrates as to who could give the most expensive games he entrusted the care of the games to the prætors; allowances from the treasury were allocated to each of these, and equivalent amounts were fixed for expenditure in every case. He limited the number of gladiators and began to organise a body of firemen, realising that the people's houses need not be left to burn merely because the aristocracy detested Egnatius Rufus, and generally believed. Velleius Paterculus says (ii. 93) that Marcellus died *ante triennium fere quam Egnatianum scelus erumperet*; and the *Egnatianum scelus* is of the year 19. The passage in Pliny (N. H. XIX. i. 24) merely proves that he died later than August 1, 23, and not necessarily in that year.

\* Velleius Paterculus, II. xcv. 3.

† The comparison of the passage in Dion (liv. 2) with that of Velleius Paterculus (II. xcv. 3) will clearly show how distance of time, superficial knowledge and the atmosphere of monarchy have influenced Dion's views upon the government of Augustus and have led him into error upon most important facts. Dion tells us that Augustus, "though the censors had been elected, performed many of their duties." Thus we seem face to face with despotic usurpation. But the intervention of Augustus is explained by Velleius Paterculus, who tells us what Dion has forgotten, that the two censors for various reasons were incompetent. The public had expected much from their work and was greatly disappointed by their incapacity, and Augustus, as usual, was bound to remedy their defects. But in virtue of what powers? This is a mystery, unless we admit that in the preceding year Augustus had been authorised to issue edicts with the force of law whenever he considered such action advisable. This power he now used for the first time.



this though he had criticised the action of Rufus. He entrusted the curule ædiles with the business of extinguishing fires, and gave them six hundred slaves for the purpose—a more numerous body than they had hitherto commanded.\* 22 B.C.

However, the struggle between the democrats and the aristocracy upon the question of Primus was renewed, and waged with such fury that Augustus was involved notwithstanding his anxiety to remain impartial. Primus could not deny that he had undertaken his expedition without the authorisation of the Senate, but he defended himself by saying at one time that he had acted under the orders of Augustus, the commander-in-chief, and at another time under those of Marcellus.† The case of Primus. Primus was clearly inventing these justifications, as he did not venture to call Augustus as a witness; ‡ at the same time he obviously entertained hopes that Augustus would not contradict his assertion. On the other hand, the accusers of Primus could not venture to rely upon the support of Augustus, and dared not themselves ask for his evidence; thus the case seemed to depend upon a witness who met the accused and the accusers daily in the forum and could not be questioned by either party. However, on the day of the trial Augustus voluntarily appeared in court, and notwithstanding the invectives of the defence deposed that he had given no orders to the governor of Macedonia.§ Augustus thus added the condemnation of Primus to the series of concessions by which he sought to efface from the memory of the nobles the proscriptions, Philippi, the confiscations, the extermination of the family of Pompeius and the tyranny of the triumvirate. The nobility were so delighted by the intervention of Augustus that they at once induced the Senate to give him powers for convoking senatorial meetings at his own will and pleasure, as if he had been consul.||

The democratic party was most exasperated, but the course of events from this point is by no means clear.¶ Augustus The conspiracy of Cæpio and Murena.

\* Dion, liv. 2.

† Dion, liv. 3.

‡ Augustus, in fact, ἔς τε τὸ δικάστηριον αὐτεπάγγελτος ἦλθε. (Dion, liv. 3.)

§ Dion, liv. 3.

|| Ibid.

¶ Suetonius, Aug. 56. As the conspiracy of Murena could not have taken place in 23, it must belong to 22. Consequently Murena was



22 B.C.

seems to have been warned by a certain Castricius to be upon his guard, because Murena, Fannius Cæpio, and other leaders of the democratic party, with the exception of Egnatius Rufus,\* were indignant at his evidence, and were organising a conspiracy to assassinate him like Cæsar. We cannot say whether this conspiracy was a serious undertaking, or whether it was the hasty expression of the rage and excitement aroused by the affair of Primus.† It is certain, however, that Augustus, who imparted his information to Mæcenas, was at first inclined to hush the matter up. The affair, however, became a subject of gossip, apparently by the fault of Mæcenas and his wife, who was the sister of Murena.‡ Once more the person of the *princeps* became the cause of an odious system of persecutions, slanders and vengeance. Augustus by his powers as a tribune was sacrosanct, and a conspiracy against him would have been the worst form of sacrilege. The public, in admiration for Augustus, and in a new fit of piety, lost all self-restraint, and demanded condemnations without consideration for the rights or wrongs of individuals. To accuse a conspirator became a fashionable and easy manner of acquiring popularity; a vague hint, a piece of false evidence or any trifle was sufficient to convict some peaceful citizen of murderous intentions. The nobility profited by the opportunity to exterminate the last

not the consul of 23, who must have died before he entered upon office, and the fragment of the *fasti consulares* which concerns him should be completed as follows: *antequam iniret, mortuus est*. I cannot support the contrary opinion of Vagliari (*Rendiconti dell' Accademia dei Lincei*, December 19, 1897, p. 551 ff.) for two chief reasons. In the first place, Velleius Paterculus (ii. 93) tells us that the death of Marcellus took place *circa Murenæ Cæpionisque conjurationis tempus*; and we have seen that Marcellus died in 22. Secondly, Dion (liv. 3) clearly states that the conspiracy took place in consequence of, and therefore after, the trial of Primus. There is no doubt that this trial was held when Augustus was no longer consul; indeed, the accusers of Primus gave Augustus the power of convoking the Senate, which was a consular privilege. If he had been consul, the new power would have been useless, as he would have possessed it already. But when Augustus resigned the consulship his colleague was Calpurnius Piso. It is therefore probable that Murena was dead.

\* Egnatius was not included in the trial, and we shall meet with him again later.

† Dion (liii. 3) tells us that many people did not regard the conspiracy or the accusations as serious.

‡ Suetonius, *Aug.* 66.



remnants of the popular party. Any ambitious man with a leaning towards the new conservative ideas chose an adversary and brought an accusation; the conspiracy against Augustus became the pretext for a savage persecution, and the last hatreds of the civil wars were vented upon victims practically innocent of crime. Certain bold and thoughtful men ventured to withstand the universal madness, protesting against unfounded accusations, refusing to convict when they were judges or manifesting sympathy with the condemned.\* Their protestations, however, proved fruitless. These accusations were even used by several young men as a means of proclaiming their adherence to the new noble party, which wished to destroy democratic tradition and to restore the old aristocracy and conservative party as far as possible. One of these was Tiberius, who accused Cæpio.†

Augustus neither favoured the persecution nor made any attempt to stop it, but he was horrified by the fury of the people and by the facility with which innocent and guilty were alike condemned; he therefore proposed a law making a condemnation conditional upon a unanimous vote.‡ Then he hastened his departure. At Rome he was menaced by a danger yet more serious and constant than conspiracy; this was the popular admiration, which pursued him incessantly, had appointed him consul for the year 21 in spite of his protestations, and forced him to use his dictatorial powers every moment. Yielding to popular outcry, and also to necessity, he had been obliged to use these powers once more in a matter of little importance but considerable urgency. Complaints arose throughout Italy of the mysterious disappearance of people who were said to have been seized by unscrupulous landholders and to have been imprisoned during the anarchy of the revolution. It was asserted that, during the years when the conflicting parties had recruited so many legions, many landholders had opened their prisons to young men who wished to avoid enlistment, offering to pass them off as slaves, and had afterwards refused to release them. Augustus was persuaded that the ordinary magistrates were incompetent to deal with such a matter; he

Augustus  
leaves Rome  
and is pursued  
by complaints.

\* Dion, liv. 3.

† Suetonius, *Tib.* 8.

‡ Dion, liv. 4.



22 B.C. had already been able to congratulate Tiberius upon his exertions during the famine, and now commissioned him to search the prisons, to question the slaves and to liberate any freemen whom he might find.\* He then resigned his consulship, handing over Gallia Narbonensis and Cyprus to the Senate, and left Rome in the second half of the year 22; his movement might have been regarded as flight from the dictatorship. He made some stay in Sicily, the first stage of his journey, to conclude the work of establishing colonies for his veterans of Actium in certain towns of which we know little.† Once more the offer of the dictatorship pursued the fugitive. While he was busy with the details of his colonies Augustus was overtaken by a deputation of leading citizens, begging him to return to Rome. Two candidates, Quintus Lepidus and Marcus Silenus, had come forward for the consulship which he had vacated; great disturbances had broken out, and as no one was sufficiently strong to suppress them the elections had come to a standstill. Augustus was wanted, as usual, in every circumstance and for every business; he must be corn merchant, state banker, conqueror, road surveyor and chief of police. The two candidates also followed the deputation to plead their case before him. Augustus would not return; he reprimanded the candidates and ordered them not to return to Rome until the election was concluded. His admonitions proved useless; the agitation broke out once more when the election was resumed, and a new consul had not been elected on January 1 of the year 21. Realising the necessity for action, Augustus resolved to make a larger use of his discretionary powers by sending Agrippa to Rome as governor. The death of Marcellus had brought the two friends together, and the embarrassments at Rome induced Augustus to make a full reconciliation with Agrippa. He gave him as wife Julia, the widow of Marcellus, and in virtue of his discretionary power conferred upon him the government of Rome, which Messala had resigned in 26 at the end of a week. By making Agrippa

\* Suetonius, *Tib.* 8.

† Dion, liv. 6-7; Pliny, N. H. III. viii. 8; C. I. L. x. 7345; Strabo, VI. ii. 5. We only know that a colony was founded at Syracuse in that year. The foundation of a colony at Palermo is disputed.



his son-in-law he proposed to stimulate his zeal and to give him more authority with the people.\* Then, in the spring of 21 he set sail for Greece. Notwithstanding his efforts to revivify the old constitution, notwithstanding the revival of the aristocratic spirit and the attempted revival of republican traditions, Augustus had been obliged to assume and to exercise the authority of a semi-dictator on various occasions, and was now reduced to flight lest the dictatorship, with all its powers, should be forced upon him. 21 B.C.

The plan of his proposed eastern journey had been extended. Possibly the Parthian king, as a passage in Dion indicates, was disinclined to keep his promises after recovering his son; possibly Augustus hoped to dazzle the Italian public with a safe and brilliant feat of arms; in any case, he had resolved to invade Armenia with an army. He knew that the little eastern monarchies were easily crushed; if the Parthian king sent him the standards and the prisoners upon the entrance of the Roman army to Armenia he might easily represent to Italy that his invasion had forced the Parthian king to implore the friendship of Rome. Augustus' eastern journey.

\* Dion, liv. 6.





## APPENDIX





## APPENDIX

### THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM\*

THE account given by Dion Cassius† is as follows: "The conflict, which was long doubtful, concluded in this way: Cleopatra's ship was moored behind the combatants and was beaten by the waves; she could not endure the strain of waiting for the long-delayed decision; devoured by female impatience worthy of an Egyptian woman, by the anxiety of her long suspense, and by continual uncertainty upon the nature of the issue, she took flight and signalled to her subjects to flee. Upon this order the Egyptians immediately spread their sails and set out for the open sea, favoured by the rising breeze; Antony, persuaded that they were flying, not under the orders of Cleopatra, but from the fear inspired by defeat, also followed them. Despondency and confusion then overcame the rest of his force. . . ."

The account of Plutarch is as follows:‡ "The conflict was wholly doubtful and the victory uncertain, when suddenly Cleopatra's sixty ships set sail and fled through the galleys which were engaged; as they were drawn up behind Antony's heavy vessels, they threw the line into disorder by their passage. The enemy, observing their movement, were greatly surprised to see them running towards the Peloponnese under a strong wind. At that moment Antony, far from showing the ordinary prudence of a general, or the most ordinary courage and common sense, testified to the truth of the jesting proverb that the mind of a man in love lives in another body. Drawn onward by a woman as if by bonds which obliged him to follow her every movement, no sooner had he seen Cleopatra's vessel set sail than he forgot all, abandoned and betrayed those who were fighting and dying on his behalf, and entered a quinquireme; with no other companions of his flight than Alexander of Syria and Scellius, he set out after a woman who was ruining her own cause, and was soon to ruin him."

\* This study appeared in the *Revue de Paris*, March 15, 1906, under the title "Antony and Cleopatra."

† L. 33.

‡ *Ant.* 73.

Such is the account given by the two ancient historians of the battle which concluded the great civil wars of Rome ; it is a strange and romantic story, which has been the delight of poets and the despair of historians. Folly and absurdity undoubtedly play a large part in times of social dissolution ; but can it be said that this consideration authorises us to admit that in the troubled days at the close of the republic, a general could have thrown away a decisive battle merely to follow his mistress ?

The improbability seems too great even for a period of dissolution. Within recent years a French admiral, Jurien de la Gravière,\* and a German professor, Herr Kromayer,† have demonstrated from the stories of Plutarch and Dion that the flight had been arranged beforehand between the queen of Egypt and the triumvir. Antony knew at the outset of the battle that Cleopatra would retire and had promised to follow her. The fact is of importance, because it overthrows the legend concerning the “feminine impatience worthy of an Egyptian woman” by which Cleopatra is said to have been seized in the midst of the conflict. It remains to be explained why Antony and Cleopatra should thus have arranged to flee. Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, who has studied the campaign from a military point of view, regards the flight as a strategical movement suggested to Antony by the dangerous position of his army and his fleet. He thinks that Cleopatra persuaded Antony to carry the war into Asia ; the pretended flight would be nothing more than a retiring movement intended to draw the enemy to a more favourable battlefield.

There are two objections to this theory. In the first place, it is not proved that the situation of Antony’s army and fleet were as disastrous as the learned admiral supposes. Moreover, why should Antony and Cleopatra have taken flight before the conclusion of the battle ? Was Antony’s real idea, as the admiral supposes, “to break the enemy’s line if they attempted to bar his passage” ? In that case, Antony would have been obliged to hurl the whole of his fleet upon the forces of Octavianus, and not merely the Egyptian squadron of Cleopatra. Her light vessels could not break the solid lines of the enemy ; they could merely pass through the middle of the triremes and escape by means of their speed, a movement which more nearly resembles flight than attack.

The accounts of the two historians contain but a legendary explanation. By the importation of a love romance, they attempt to simplify an extremely complicated history, in which the motive force is one of

\* J. de la Gravière, *La Marine des Ptolémées et la Marine des Romains*. Paris, 1885, pp. 70–80.

† In a study published in vol. 34 of *Hermès*.



the most obscure and terrible influences in social life. This force is the opposition which imposes itself as a political necessity upon every period in which social forces exist in mutual antagonism, without any immediate possibility of success for either. Every political combination in such a cause must rest upon some partial or temporary compromise which can never become harmony; this compromise then becomes a principle of policy, but a principle both of life and of death. At the outset it becomes a condition of success, in the final event it is the cause of inevitable ruin. These coalitions are created by the bold energy of audacious minds, or by the vulgar expedients of third-rate politicians, and resemble nothing so much as great towers seamed with cracks, where fissures gradually extend in spite of human effort until the whole edifice falls into ruin. The Battle of Actium was but the final collapse of a policy based upon antagonistic principles. The time from the outset of this policy to the final catastrophe includes the most interesting part of Antony's life, and some brief summary of this is necessary to understand his strange destiny.

\* \* \* \* \*

Courageous but unintelligent, a good soldier but a poor general, an imprudent statesman, a debauchee and a sensualist—such is the judgment of history upon Antony. He committed the great crime of suffering defeat, and the censure of posterity has therefore been severe. Cæsar, however, seems to have passed a very different judgment upon him. Cæsar took notice of Antony when he was yet a youth, gave him encouragement and support in his last campaigns in Gaul, and used him as a lieutenant in difficult tasks during the civil war. After the Battle of Pharsalia, Antony was installed in Italy as Vice-Dictator, or *magister equitum*, where his administration was not distinguished by special capacity; in the year 47 he allowed a kind of social revolution to break out at Rome, which he then suppressed with extraordinary severity. At the same time it may be questioned whether any man, except Cæsar, would have been more successful in coping with so difficult a situation. Cæsar himself, notwithstanding his first vexation, recognised this fact and was reconciled to Antony, appointing him consul and overwhelming his family with favour.

Upon his readmission to Cæsar's intimacy, Antony became the confidant of the dictator during the last eight months of his life; he had full knowledge of Cæsar's plans, and after his assassination, he was able, on the night of March 15 and 16, to seize all his papers; probably he was the only man who knew their importance. During the political struggle and civil wars which followed Cæsar's death, Antony doubtless committed many mistakes, but he emerged triumphant from



every struggle, and on many occasions gave proof of remarkable energy. The credit for the two victories at Philippi was his alone, for Octavianus gave no help when he defeated Cassius in the first and Brutus in the second. Even the ancient historians, severe as they are in their judgment of him, admit his capacity until the victory of Philippi, and place the starting-point of his deterioration in the winter of 41-40, when he met Cleopatra at Tarsus; this fatal meeting is thus represented by Plutarch as the prologue to the famous love romance : \*

"She stood upon the *Cydnus*, sailing over calm waters; the poop of the ship was of gold, the sails were of purple, the oars of silver, and the latter rose and fell to the sound of flutes which harmonised with the strains of lyres and pipes. She herself, magnificently dressed, a picture of the goddess Venus, was lying beneath a tent of gold brocade; young children dressed as the Loves stood at her side with fans for her refreshment; her women, of perfect beauty, were dressed as Nereids and Graces, some at the helm, others at the rigging. The river banks were scented with the perfumes burnt on board the ship, and thronged with the vast crowd which accompanied Cleopatra; the whole town had come together to enjoy this extraordinary sight. The people in the town square rushed forward to meet her; Antony remained alone in the tribunal where he was giving audience; the rumour went abroad that Venus, for the happiness of Asia, was come in disguise to visit Bacchus. Antony immediately sent her an invitation to supper; when however, she expressed her desire to receive him in her own dwelling, he agreed, to show his kindness and affability. He found her amidst magnificence and indescribable splendour; but nothing surprised him more than the vast quantity of torches which burned upon every side, hanging from the ceiling or attached to the walls, and forming square or circular figures of admirable harmony and design."

The triumvir falls in love with the fair queen of Egypt, and follows her to Alexandria; he spends the winter of the year 40 in the delight of her society, and overcome by this mad love, he proceeds to commit all kinds of follies.

It is not very difficult to prove that the "dazzling effect" of Cleopatra's appearance exists only in the imagination of the ancient historians. Antony was not the man to refuse anything that Cleopatra would give him. Yet, in the year 41 he spent but a few months at Alexandria. At the beginning of the year 40, at the first news that a Parthian army was marching upon Syria, he left the queen of Egypt, and for the next three years he not only remained absent from Cleopatra, but, far from thinking of love, his great energies were wholly occupied by his vast scheme for the conquest of Persia. The statement has been constantly

\* *Ant.* 27.



repeated and is still advanced that Augustus was Cæsar's heir in the history of the world, and that he completed or performed what his adopted father had begun or projected. In my opinion, this is a serious mistake, because it prevents full comprehension of the action of the two rivals during the last civil war. If the true heir to a policy is the man who pursues the execution of his predecessor's plans, it was through Antony and not through Octavianus that the spirit of Cæsar continued to work. During the last two years of his life, Cæsar was preoccupied by political and economic difficulties resulting from the civil war, and hoped to find the solution of them in the conquest of Persia. This great enterprise was to restore to his government the imperial force which it had lost by reason of its revolutionary origin; it was also to provide the wealth necessary to avert the fearful economic crisis under which the empire was struggling. At the outset of the year 44, when he was assassinated by Brutus, Cæsar was working with great energy, not to reorganise the empire or to found a monarchy, but to prepare for war with the Parthians; on the evening of March 15, Antony carried to his house, with Cæsar's other papers, the plans which the dictator had drawn up for this enterprise. Others might inherit Cæsar's name and fortune, but Antony had secured his last great idea. For two years his attention had been absorbed by the struggle with the conspirators, and he was unable to put this project into immediate practice. The situation was difficult enough in Cæsar's life-time, and grew more embarrassing after his death, until Antony persuaded himself that only the conquest of Persia could provide the wealth and prestige which would enable him to dominate these difficulties.

The forces of dissolution which Cæsar, though with great difficulty, had been able to repress, were now let loose upon the empire. Law, tradition and the constitution had lost their old authority, the very gods were growing old and their temples were in ruin; there were no organised forces, except the vast armies of plunderers recruited for the civil war. It was obvious that this confusion could only end in fearful catastrophe, unless some one man, some party, or some institution could recover some measure of authority over the masses. Such authority Antony hoped to regain by the Persian campaign, and the mere fact that he entertained such hopes is a striking proof of his energy. Can the man who was ready to contemplate so vast an enterprise be regarded as nothing more than a sensualist, madly in love with an Egyptian woman? He might have seized, like Octavianus, the highest position by petty deceit and underhand aggression; he preferred, however, to secure it by means of a great and dangerous exploit.

For two years Antony gathered money, concentrated legions in Asia, and remodelled the political map of the East in order to secure whole-



hearted supporters among the kings and chieftains of Asia Minor. He made every arrangement for the invasion of Persia by the road indicated by Cæsar through Armenia. What is still more extraordinary in a man enamoured of Cleopatra, he even married Octavia, the sister of Octavianus, to avoid the embarrassment of political difficulties at home during his campaign.

From the year 40 to the year 37, it is impossible to discover the least influence exerted by Cleopatra upon Antony. We do not assert that all connection between Antony and the Egyptian queen was broken off. Plutarch tells us, for instance,\* that Antony had with him an Egyptian soothsayer, who attempted to withdraw his affections from Octavianus and Octavia, by casting horoscopes more or less ingenious. It is quite possible that this soothsayer was one of Cleopatra's agents, and equally possible that there were others, and that she maintained a correspondence with the triumvir. Cleopatra, however, is no longer paramount in Antony's life or policy; his attention is now concentrated upon the performance of Cæsar's plan, and it is not until the end of the year 37 that an unexpected event brings Cleopatra back to his life. In the spring of the year 37, the intrigues of Octavianus force Antony to return with his fleet to the shores of Southern Italy; he wastes several months at Tarentum in interminable negotiations with his brother-in-law; when these are concluded towards the end of August, he can return to Syria. But from Corfu he sends Octavia back to Italy, despatches Fonteius Capito to Alexandria, and then betakes himself to Antioch, where Cleopatra soon joins him.

At the beginning of the year 36, an event takes place at Antioch which was never suspected by Shakespeare, who has depicted this loving couple for us in such glowing colours. The lovers who "gave a kingdom for a mirth" are married like two respectable citizens. M. Letronne has the credit of elucidating, by the study of numismatics, this point, which is obscure in the historians' narratives. At the beginning of the year 36, Antony becomes king of Egypt by this marriage with the queen. Why did Antony and Cleopatra resolve to marry? What was the meaning of this strange act? What negotiations preceded its accomplishment? It is not likely that the marriage was the result of precipitate decision, while the complete absence of any information concerning the preparations for it proves that it was secretly contemplated. There are several other strange points in connection with it. Antony did not divorce Octavia, and therefore held two wives after the year 36. His marriage is celebrated, not at Alexandria, the capital of his future realm, but at Antioch. He shows an obvious anxiety to hide the results of his action as far as possible. He does not

\* Chap. 34.



assume the title of king of Egypt, he strikes Egyptian coins with his image, but he merely assumes the title of *αὐτοκράτωρ*, the Greek translation of the Latin *imperator* and triumvir. Finally, no sooner is the marriage concluded, than he leaves his wife and starts for Persia.

Antony must have had sound reasons for such strange conduct, reasons which we must attempt to divine by conjecture, for want of documentary evidence. Dion informs us, and the whole history of this age confirms his statement, that Cleopatra's government was by no means popular in Egypt, and that she had everything to fear from one of those palace revolutions so frequent under the last of the Ptolemies. It is quite possible that she was anxious to protect her power from secret conspiracies with the help of Antony and his legions, and that she invited him to Alexandria in the year 40 in order to propose the marriage which took place in the year 36. At first Antony realised the incongruity of the proposal; while enjoying the means of persuasion employed by the queen, he listened to her arguments unconvinced. Moreover, he was soon recalled to Italy by disturbances at home, and was entirely absorbed by his great Persian scheme. Cleopatra did not lose courage; her spies and agents were about the triumvir; her correspondence with him was maintained, and she waited her opportunity to advance her proposal once more. Thanks to the Persian war, she was ultimately successful.

Antony's political preparations for this campaign were hampered by a most serious difficulty, the economic crisis resulting from the last of the civil wars. A kind of universal bankruptcy had absorbed the supplies of precious metal throughout the empire, had shattered public and private credit, and depreciated securities of every kind. Antony was in want of money, as is shown by the coins which he struck at this time, which are almost all debased. Egypt, on the other hand, was extremely rich, and the royal family was in possession of the only great treasure in the Mediterranean world which Rome had not as yet plundered.

It would have been most dangerous to plunge into Persia with sixteen legions and without money for their regular payment; hence Antony probably thought that the treasures of the Ptolemies were cheaply bought at the price of marriage. He may have accepted Cleopatra's proposal in order to borrow from the rich Egyptian queen the supplies necessary to meet the expense of his conquest. Whatever the view of modern historians may be, the fact remains that republican tradition was still very strong in Italy. Antony was aware that a marriage with the queen was not included in those political expedients which the representatives of Rome might use; Italian opinion would have regarded him as mad or criminal if he had proclaimed his intention



of becoming king of Egypt. For that reason he wished to hide the real meaning of his action, and therefore did not divorce Octavia, celebrated his marriage in a Syrian town, and avoided using the title of king of Egypt on his coinage.

Antony's marriage seems to me to be the conclusion of an alliance between himself and Egypt, and it is at the same time the first great inconsistency of his eastern policy. He became king of Egypt, but he concealed the fact; he wished to use this unadmitted royalty to conduct a war with Egyptian money as a Roman magistrate, from which he would monopolise the glory and the profit.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Persian campaign began in the spring of the year 36, and its progress was anxiously followed in Italy by Octavianus and his party. Throughout the summer, Octavianus and his friends offered great public sacrifices to the gods for the success of the war, but they secretly longed for the destruction of Antony's army like that of Crassus. Antony's triumph would make him master of the situation. Octavianus could not endure to play a secondary part. These patriotic wishes were but half fulfilled. More fortunate than Crassus, Antony escaped destruction at the hands of the Parthians, but his attempt at the conquest of Persia proved a failure. After a lengthy siege of the Median capital, he was obliged to retreat, without touching the actual territory of the Parthians. The only clear narrative of the war which we possess, that of Plutarch, is extremely short, and it does not enable us to decide whether Cæsar had been mistaken in his estimate of the Parthian power, or whether Antony mismanaged his plan of campaign. Contemporaries, as usual, could see nothing but the failure, and their criticism of its cause was soon forthcoming. The fact that Octavianus became Augustus was due much more to the Parthians than to his own genius. The retreat from Persia meant for Antony what the retreat from Russia meant for Napoleon; it marked the beginning of his downfall. His prestige in the east was so shaken that during the winter of 36-35, Sextus Pompeius, a fugitive from Sicily, was able to organise an insurrection in Asia Minor and to open negotiations with the kings of Armenia, Pontius and Parthia. Antony speedily crushed the insurrection, but he realised that his reputation could only be restored by some brilliant exploit to counterbalance this initial check. Unfortunately the inconsistent nature of his policy now became more pronounced, and endangered the strength of his position.

Octavianus does not seem to have been anxious to profit by this failure at the outset; on the contrary, he displayed most benevolent intentions, and even sent soldiers to repair the losses of the war. These troops, however, were not placed under an expert general, but



were entrusted to the guidance of his sister Octavia, Antony's wife. By this adroit measure, Octavianus attempted to force a declaration from Antony, stating which woman was his legal wife; he would be obliged either to declare his royal position by supporting Cleopatra, or to break his alliance with Egypt by receiving Octavia as his legal wife; and this in the east, which now regarded him as the husband of the Egyptian queen. The problem was the more embarrassing for Antony as the demands of Cleopatra became more urgent at that moment. Plutarch (chapter 56) says as follows:

"Cleopatra, feeling that Octavia was coming to dispute possession of Antony's heart, pretended the most violent passion for Antony, and refused food, to give herself the appearance of ill-health. Whenever he came to visit her, she gazed upon him with startled eyes, and drooped in despondent longing when he went away. She was careful to be surprised in tears, but hastened to wipe them from her face and to hide her weeping from Antony; she made special use of these artifices when she saw that Antony was preparing to leave Syria and to join the Median king. (Chapter 57.) Those flatterers, who wished to show their zeal in her service, reproached Antony most bitterly, accusing him of harshness and callousness, and telling him that he was allowing a woman who breathed only for him to die of grief. . . . Antony was softened or possibly overwhelmed by these arguments, and fearing that Cleopatra might refuse to live, immediately returned to Alexandria and put off his Median expedition until the spring, though he had been informed that the Parthians were shaken by sedition."

Many of these details are highly probable. Women could never have played and could never play so great a part in politics unless their smiles and tears were often mysteriously able to reinforce, and on occasion to overturn, the calculations even of statesmen. Moreover, Antony was regarded as a man peculiarly susceptible to feminine influence, and it is not surprising that a clever, intelligent and dexterous woman like Cleopatra, whose power over him steadily increased, should have used such devices. However, amid these romantic details, Plutarch's story also shows us that the queen was attempting to turn the failure of the first Persian expedition to her own advantage. Antony's departure for Media was connected with his project for the second Parthian campaign; by pretending to oppose this departure and a new war, and also by showing her jealousy of Octavia, Cleopatra forced Antony to make an official announcement of his marriage with her, and to break with Rome. Cleopatra in 36 had been contented with an almost clandestine marriage, for the reason that she had not been able to secure



any further concession at that time ; but her intelligence immediately realised that after the conquest of Persia, Antony would break the alliance and be reconciled to Octavia at the expense of Egypt ; he must therefore be forced to accept the official position of king of Egypt and to divorce Octavia.

The moment was favourable to Cleopatra's designs. Several children had been born of their marriage. After his first check, Antony's confidence in the success of Cæsar's plans was no longer absolute. The foundation of a new dynasty in Egypt was an exploit which might well compensate for the conquest of Persia. Antony's intentions thus began to waver between two great objects ; at one moment he entertained the great Cæsarean idea of conquering Persia and becoming the chief of the Roman republic ; at another time he thought of founding a new Egyptian empire with the new dynasty. No doubt the real authority which he enjoyed in Egypt, and the wealth and luxury of the court of the Ptolemies, had induced him to despise the position of leader at Rome for which he had long struggled. How could this leadership be compared with the realm of the Ptolemies, increased by the addition of the Persian empire ?

Thus Antony became continually more involved in the complications of this antagonism between the Italian and the Egyptian policy. On the one hand, Cleopatra's demands were increasing, and on the other, his own hesitation became more obvious. At the outset he had wished to be king of Egypt and Roman magistrate simultaneously as a means to the conquest of Persia. Now the inconsistency of this policy had made this means an actual purpose, and he wished to conquer Persia and found an Egyptian empire at the same time. He decided upon a new Parthian campaign for the year 33, but during the autumn of the year 34, he preceded this effort by a measure of the utmost importance, the "Donations of Alexandria," the greatest concession that could have been made to the demands of Cleopatra and to the Egyptian policy. Plutarch gives the following account of it (chapter 64) :

"The gymnasium was filled with a vast multitude, and two golden thrones were raised upon a silver platform, one for himself and the other for Cleopatra ; he then declared her queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Africa and Coele Syria, associating with the government of this country Cæsarion, who was regarded as the son of the first Cæsar ; he then conferred the title of King of Kings upon his children by the queen ; to Alexander he gave Armenia, Media and the Parthian empire when he should have conquered it ; Ptolemy his second son, received Phoenicia, Syria and Cilicia. He presented his two sons to the people ; Alexander was dressed in a Median robe and wore upon his head a tiara and the



pointed cap called cidaris, the royal dress of the kings of Media and Armenia; Ptolemy wore a long cloak, slippers and a cap surrounded with a diadem, the royal dress of Alexander's successors. . . . From that day forward Cleopatra invariably appeared in public in a dress sacred to Isis, and gave audience to the people under the name of the New Isis."

There are some errors of detail in this story, but the substance is correct. Antony was forming a great Egyptian empire at the expense of the Roman empire, and was dividing it between Cleopatra and her children. He could not venture to publish his marriage and take the title of king of Egypt, but on this occasion he consented to send an official copy of the "Donations of Alexandria" to the Roman senate, to secure recognition of the new state by the republic. It is possible that Antony at first regarded these concessions as a provisional arrangement intended to overcome the opposition of Cleopatra to the second Persian war; after the war, he may have hoped to disregard the queen's claims and to secure the approval of his "Donations" for the time being as a proconsular measure. Proconsuls had often added territories to subject States under Roman protection, even though some reduction of Roman provinces was involved. On this occasion, however, Antony was mistaken. In the course of the year 33, while he was urging the preparations for his second campaign in Armenia, a keen agitation broke out at Rome against the "Donations of Alexandria." Italy had not mistaken the significance of this measure; public feeling had already been aroused by the strange romance of Antony and Cleopatra, by current rumours of his insane passion, and by his unworthy treatment of Octavia; the Italian public was angered by the extent of the concessions, and popular indignation burst forth with such violence that the senators who were ordered to communicate to the Senate the official announcement of Antony's measure would not venture to come forward. The agitation was increased when Octavianus attempted to improve his popularity, and to hamper the new war against Persia by opening a vigorous campaign against Antony's eastern policy; Antony, indeed, he spared, but Cleopatra and Cæsarion became the object of his furious attacks.

The Egyptian queen was speedily regarded with the keenest animosity at Rome and in Italy. At first Antony remained disdainful and indifferent, but he soon perceived that this agitation might surround him with the gravest perils. The measure which he had executed at Alexandria with great solemnity before the assembled east, a measure upon which the whole of his eastern policy was based, had not yet been disavowed at Rome, but only because Rome was afraid of him. Would that fear continue if his second Parthian



campaign was a failure ? The new Egyptian empire must be his refuge in case the Persian enterprise resulted in disaster ; if Rome now refused to recognise this empire, there was no prospect of recognition after another failure in Persia. Once again the inherent inconsistency of his policy had nullified his calculations. During the last six months of the year 33, he persuaded himself that his preparations for the Persian war might be abandoned, that he must crush the intrigues of Octavianus and the agitation against his Egyptian policy, and extort a recognition from Rome of the "Donations of Alexandria."

\* \* \* \* \*

Only upon some such considerations does it seem possible to explain why Antony suddenly suspended his preparations for the Parthian war during the last six months of the year 33, hastily led his army to the shore of the *Ægean*, summoned the kings and chieftains of Asia Minor to Ephesus, and invited Cleopatra to meet him there. His idea was to make a great military demonstration to impress the Senate, the party of Octavianus, and the whole of Italy, and to conclude the debate upon the "Donations of Alexandria." At this decisive moment, however, a further result of the inconsistency inherent in his policy becomes obvious ; Antony does not venture to admit, in his negotiations with the Senate, that he is particularly anxious for the recognition of the "Donations," but declares himself anxious to deliver the republic from the tyranny of Octavianus, and to re-establish the republican constitution.

Thus, when relations grew strained and a breach seemed imminent at the outset of the year 32, the leading citizens joined Antony's side and went to Ephesus in a body. Notwithstanding his many failures, Antony was a noble of ancient family, a remarkable general, a distinguished orator, and then nearly fifty years of age ; he inspired greater confidence than the youthful Octavianus, who owed everything to Cæsar's name, and had hitherto been distinguished only for pitiless and unscrupulous ambition. Public opinion had blamed the "Donations," but was much more angry with Cleopatra than with Antony, and a few assertions of republican feeling had gained for Antony the sympathy of the upper classes. No one believed that Antony would ever sacrifice the interests of Rome to those of Egypt. No doubt those who hastened from Italy to join Antony, and knew the vigour of public feeling against his eastern policy, were persuaded that Antony had been mistaken, and that he must break with this policy and with Cleopatra. The queen of Egypt was so profoundly hated in Italy that public opinion must be satisfied by a definite and open breach. They were, however, very confident of the



triumvir's wisdom, and felt sure that he would recognise the necessity for such action.

Consequently, those who left Rome were considerably astonished to find Cleopatra at Ephesus, where she was by no means lost in the crowd of Asiatic kings and chieftains, but held a leading position, always at Antony's side, giving him advice and issuing orders to every one, even the Roman senators, who were so benevolent as to obey her commands. Cleopatra had always been careful to secure friends and partisans amongst Antony's Roman followers by using the all-powerful persuasion of money. We know that she had appointed an obscure senator, a certain Caius Ovinius, director of her royal manufactories, and we may assume that this was not an isolated case. Ephesus was full of Romans who recognised Cleopatra as their sovereign mistress, and stooped to address her as "queen," to the supreme disgust of the true Quirites. At the same time the newly arrived Romans at first believed that Antony only tolerated this scandal because he under-estimated its dangers at a distance from Italy. Among his Roman following was a man of high distinction, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus. Domitius gathered round him all the most influential Romans in Antony's suite who were opposed to his Egyptian policy, and undertook the task of persuading him that Cleopatra must be sent back to Egypt.

The dismissal of Cleopatra would deprive Octavianus and his party of their most formidable weapon, would give the lie to their slanders, and would secure Antony's position by turning public feeling in his favour. Notwithstanding his personal influence, the obvious wisdom of this advice, and the warmth of his zeal, Domitius met with invincible resistance. Cleopatra had foreseen that Antony would fall under the influence of the Roman party if she left him, that this party was preparing a reconciliation with Octavia at her expense, and that the "Donations of Alexandria" would be revoked to deprive Octavianus and his party of their chief ground of accusation. She was therefore not content with her present position, and resolved to make reconciliation impossible by forcing Antony to divorce Octavia.

The struggle was desperate and for a moment Domitius seemed to have won the day. Antony had already ordered Cleopatra to return to her kingdom, but once again she relied upon the magical power of money. Among the adherents of the triumvir she found an officer who possessed his entire confidence, Canidius; she won his support by large sums and at length secured the upper hand. Thus the followers of Antony were divided into two parties, the party of Cleopatra led by Canidius, at variance with the Roman party under



Domitius Ahenobarbus. Here we have a further result of the original antagonism. The two parties were soon hopelessly divided upon the question which represented their several views—the divorce of Octavia. Cleopatra's party was anxious to consolidate the Egyptian empire by strengthening the tie between the queen and the triumvir, and therefore demanded a divorce which was to provoke a final breach between the two triumvirs. The Roman party desired a reconciliation between Octavianus and Antony, and vigorously opposed an action which would imply war; Octavianus would understand that Cleopatra's influence was paramount, would realise that war was inevitable in the long run, and would certainly seize the immediate opportunity because it was the most favourable.

Antony hesitated for a long time. At length in the spring of 32, he assembled his friends in Greece, and laid the question before them. A keen debate ensued, but once again Cleopatra's party was triumphant. Antony sent letters of divorce to Rome, and as though he feared this action would make a bad impression upon the soldiers, he immediately delivered a speech, in which he promised to re-establish the republican constitution two months after the victory. The divorce provoked the war. Octavianus and his party began a fierce campaign of slander against Antony; they accused him of wishing to make Cleopatra Queen of Rome, spread rumours of his madness; forced the Senate to declare war upon him, and mobilised the fleet and army in the last months of the year 32. Antony sent his fleet into Greece with an army of nineteen legions, and the kings and chieftains of Asia with their troops. In the spring of 31, the two armies were encamped upon the shores of the bay of Actium; the fleets were near facing one another, Antony's fleet in the bay of Actium, and the fleet of Octavianus in the bay of Komaros close at hand. The terrible conflict anxiously awaited by the whole world, which was to annihilate one of the two armies, was long delayed. The spring and part of the summer were passed in almost complete inaction, apart from the few unimportant skirmishes inaccurately related by the most ancient historians.

This inactivity is especially surprising on the part of Antony, from whom a vigorous offensive was to be expected. Antony commanded superior forces; his prestige as general was greater, and he had provoked the war. Why did he not imitate his master, Cæsar, who had always done his best to conclude a civil war with the least possible delay? At Philippi, Antony had taken the offensive with an energy worthy of Cæsar; what was the mysterious force which now paralysed his decision and his will? The months went by; Octavianus in vain sought to penetrate Antony's mysterious want of enterprise and feared some trap; but Antony would not attack. One day at the end of August, two leading



members of Antony's party, Dellius and Domitius Ahenobarbus, appeared in the camp of Octavianus announcing that they had left their master. They brought strange news; Antony was preparing to withdraw to Egypt with his army without fighting a serious battle; he would pretend to give battle by sea to cover his retreat, but he had resolved to return to Egypt with Cleopatra.

This most important fact is related by Dion. In one passage he tells us (chapter l. 23) that Octavianus "was informed by Dellius and by others of the enemy's intentions"; in another passage (l. 31) he says "that Octavianus proposed to give the enemy free passage in order to fall upon his rear while he was in flight; he hoped from the rapidity of his ships to catch him without difficulty, to show the world that Antony was attempting to flee and thus to secure the allegiance of Antony's soldiers without striking a blow." Dion adds that Octavianus was "dissuaded by Agrippa, who feared that they might be outstripped by adversaries ready to use their sails."

This discussion between Agrippa and Octavianus would be inexplicable, if delays had not assured Octavianus that Antony had no intention of attacking, but merely wished to retreat, as indeed has been proved by the Admiral Jurien de la Gravière and by Herr Kromayer. But why should Antony wish to retire without fighting when his army and his fleet were more powerful than those of his rival? Dion, who was unable to comprehend the history of Actium, and who confuses the most insignificant details with the most important facts of his narrative, says that the project of this retreat was inspired by Cleopatra (chapter l. 15): "After many various proposals, Cleopatra's notion won the day; she urged that garrisons should be placed in the most exposed positions, while the rest of the army should follow herself and Antony to Egypt."

During the preceding year Cleopatra had expended her energies in promoting this war, and at first the notion seems incredible; nor could we regard it as credible if we had not a satisfactory explanation of this change of front. We have therefore to consider why Cleopatra, in the course of the year 31, had come to oppose the continuation of hostilities.

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Cleopatra had insisted upon the divorce of Octavia in order to compromise Antony, and make any repeal of the "Donations of Alexandria" impossible. When this object had been attained, what further interest had she in the continuation of the war? It must be remembered that her policy, the kind of feminine imperialism that she had been able to raise amid the universal chaos of the ancient world, was based upon such strange coalitions that Cleopatra herself must have feared their sudden



collapse. Empires founded by armed forces fall to pieces with extreme rapidity; the Egyptian empire had been founded by the power of her attractions, was based upon her personal connection with Antony, and must have seemed fragile in the extreme. This war might prove its destruction, whatever the result. If Antony were defeated, the downfall of the Egyptian empire was inevitable. On the other hand, if Antony were triumphant, he would be master of the Roman empire, would have no further need of the Egyptian alliance, and would be obliged to re-enter Italy and establish himself at Rome. Would he be able to resist the persuasions of his Roman friends over whom Cleopatra's influence was small, the enthusiasm of the soldiers, the appeals of Italy and the Senate? Defeat meant Antony's ruin; victory meant the triumph of the Roman party, and either result was equally formidable for Cleopatra.

On the contrary, if she could persuade Antony to return to Egypt with his army without fighting, Octavianus would not venture to attack them in Egypt, where they could dispose of thirty legions; Antony could assume the official title of king of Egypt and found a new dynasty, abandoning Italy and the European provinces to Octavianus, to the Senate, or to any one who cared to take them.

There can be no better proof of the utter confusion into which the Roman conquest had plunged the ancient world than the sight of this feminine audacity; a woman by a few smiles and caresses attempts to defeat the Roman empire, to withdraw its fairest provinces and to group them about Egypt under a new dynasty. The destiny of the empire which Rome had created in two centuries of conflict, now seemed to be in the hands of a woman. One obstacle, however, opposed the realisation of this project. The Roman party required that Antony should be reconciled to Octavianus or should crush him. Cleopatra's programme, neither peace nor war, was disastrous to them. Domitius and his friends remembered their property and their families in Italy; they wished to live in Italy in the republic of their ancestors, and consented to spend a few years in the provinces only to increase their wealth and influence in Italy. If Antony abandoned Italy to Octavianus, what would be their position after quarrelling with Octavianus on behalf of Antony? They would be forced either to secure their return to Italy by imploring pardon from Octavianus, or to live at the Alexandrian court, amid a crowd of eunuchs and courtiers like Ovinus, the director of the royal manufactories.

This difficulty explains the most obscure points in the campaign, and also explains the quarrels between Antony and Cleopatra, which must have been very keen from time to time if, as Pliny says, Antony sometimes feared that she would poison him. This detail is in no



sort of harmony with the love-story imagined by ancient writers, but it is entirely consistent with the struggle of political interests which we have described. Withdrawal to Egypt meant for Antony the betrayal of his Roman friends and the final abandonment of Italy in order to play the part of Alexander's successor in the east. Though he had lived in revolutions for twenty years, Antony's Roman spirit hesitated before this project as before crime or folly. His legions were composed of Italians under Italian officers; was it likely that any promises would induce them to return to Egypt and become the army of an eastern monarchy? It would be most interesting to know by what means Cleopatra overcame this hesitation; the struggle was long and severe, and the queen would probably have proved unsuccessful, if Antony had not been enfeebled by much fatigue, constant strain and debauchery. Worn out by terrible anxieties at home, exhausted by work and pleasure, unnerved by the increasing difficulties which the inherent inconsistency of his policy produced, he eventually lost his grasp of facts, and was carried away by the keen sophisms of Cleopatra to a world of imaginary ideas where the gravest difficulties seemed to vanish.

Even after Antony had resolved to return to Egypt, he could not venture upon the natural course of declaring his intentions to the Roman nobles in his legions and his suite; he feared the storm of protestation and discussion which such an announcement would raise. Cleopatra equally dreaded the moment when the proposal for retreat would be officially known, for the Roman party would make desperate efforts to dissuade Antony, and she would probably be forced to sustain a final and most desperate struggle.

These fears gave rise to the idea of a naval combat to mask the retreat. Dion tells us (chapter l. 15) that "in order not to frighten their allies, Antony and Cleopatra resolved to depart neither secretly nor openly, as if they were taking flight, but like people inclined to fight and to force a passage if obstacles were placed in their way." This important text is very clear; to cut short the discussions and disputes which their proposal would arouse, Antony and Cleopatra resolved to conceal their plan until it had been accomplished, and the army and the officers would be confronted with the fact of their retreat. Thus they hoped to overcome all hesitation, and to carry their followers with them. Notwithstanding their secrecy, the strange idea of a naval battle and certain of Antony's arrangements before it, together with current rumour, aroused suspicion in the clearest minds. Dellius and Domitius realised that Antony intended to betray their cause and left him. This desertion was a serious warning to Antony, but he failed to understand it. Dominated by Cleopatra, he seems to have revealed his intentions to none but Canidius, who was ordered



to explain his departure to the army, and to lead it back to Egypt; on September 2 of the year 31, he started at the height of the battle; with her little red-sailed fleet, Cleopatra carried the triumvir back to Egypt to become the king of the country and the successor of the Ptolemies.

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Actium must therefore be removed from the list of the world's great naval battles. It was a feint, delivered to mask one of the most curious of political intrigues and wholly indecisive. Plutarch tells us that during the evening Antony's ships returned to the Bay in good order and that Octavianus spent a week in a vain endeavour to persuade the fleet and army to surrender by telling them that Antony had fled to Egypt. The soldiers would not believe him; they replied that Antony was absent for some good reason and would soon return; they showed such genuine confidence in their general, and formed so strong and devoted a force, that Canidius could not venture to reveal the truth. This profound attachment merely delayed the change of opinion in the minds of the majority, but the evidence became incontrovertible after the lapse of a week. Antony and Cleopatra had not foreseen this formidable explosion of national feeling, and their mistake proved their ruin. In the eyes of his country their famous general had become a traitor. In irresistible indignation and fury the legions surrendered to Octavianus. Yet more violent was the outburst of public opinion in Italy; Antony and Cleopatra were overwhelmed by the common hatred, and a universal demand arose for the punishment of the two lovers, their death, and the conquest of Egypt; Octavianus became the object of general admiration, and was regarded as a heaven-sent deliverer.

The prudent Octavianus, uneasy, hesitating and astonished, hardly daring to believe the evidence of his senses, had watched Antony's power for many months crumbling to pieces throughout the east, and from this day he became the glorious saviour of the capital. He did not immediately realise the fact, for neither himself, nor Agrippa, nor any of his friends realised the true importance of events immediately after Actium. This modesty, however, was of short duration. Octavianus was an adept in the means most commonly employed by parties and politicians to deceive the masses; the exaggeration of difficulties to increase the merit and the credit of those who overcome them. If Octavianus and his friends were thus unable to understand the events in which they had taken part, it is obvious that contemporaries and blockheads must have been further mystified. The conquerors turned this ignorance to account, and with the help of the writers who are always ready to support false history, the heroic



legend of the battle and its three personages was gradually formed. Cleopatra ready to conquer Rome, to overwhelm Italy with a flood of Orientals and degrade her proud senators to the infamous post of eunuchs; Antony intoxicated by her caresses and delirious from her spells, placing his army and his reputation at the service of her criminal ambition; Octavianus rising in proud, bold heroism to confront this formidable coalition, and save Rome from Oriental servitude.

Very different is the humble truth. Octavianus had been nothing more than an inactive spectator of the first great disaster provoked by the struggle between Orientalism and Italian tradition. From this point of view the importance of the war is immense. But even the genius of Octavianus could not understand it. When he returned to Italy, rich with the spoils of Egypt, he had no suspicion that the struggle was to begin under new forms throughout the empire, or that it would fill his house and family with tragedy and catastrophe during the long years of his life upon the supreme pinnacle of human greatness as *princeps*, president, and as the first citizen of the great republic to which peace had now returned.





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